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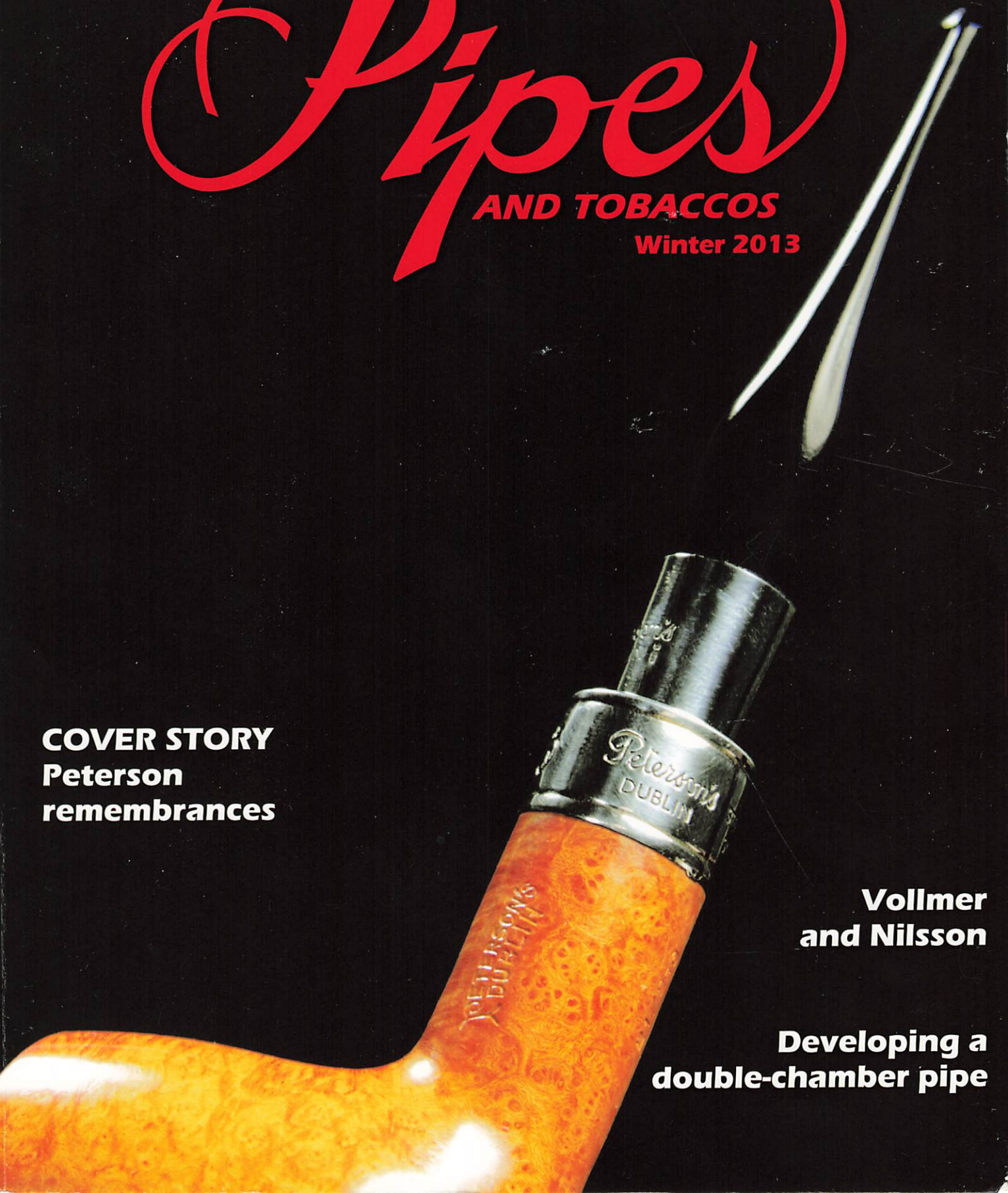

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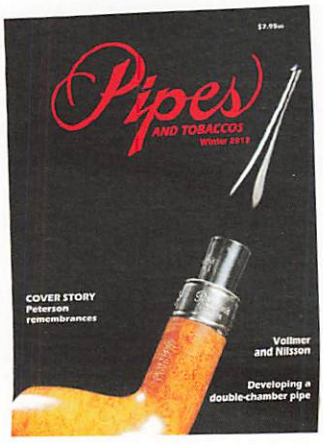
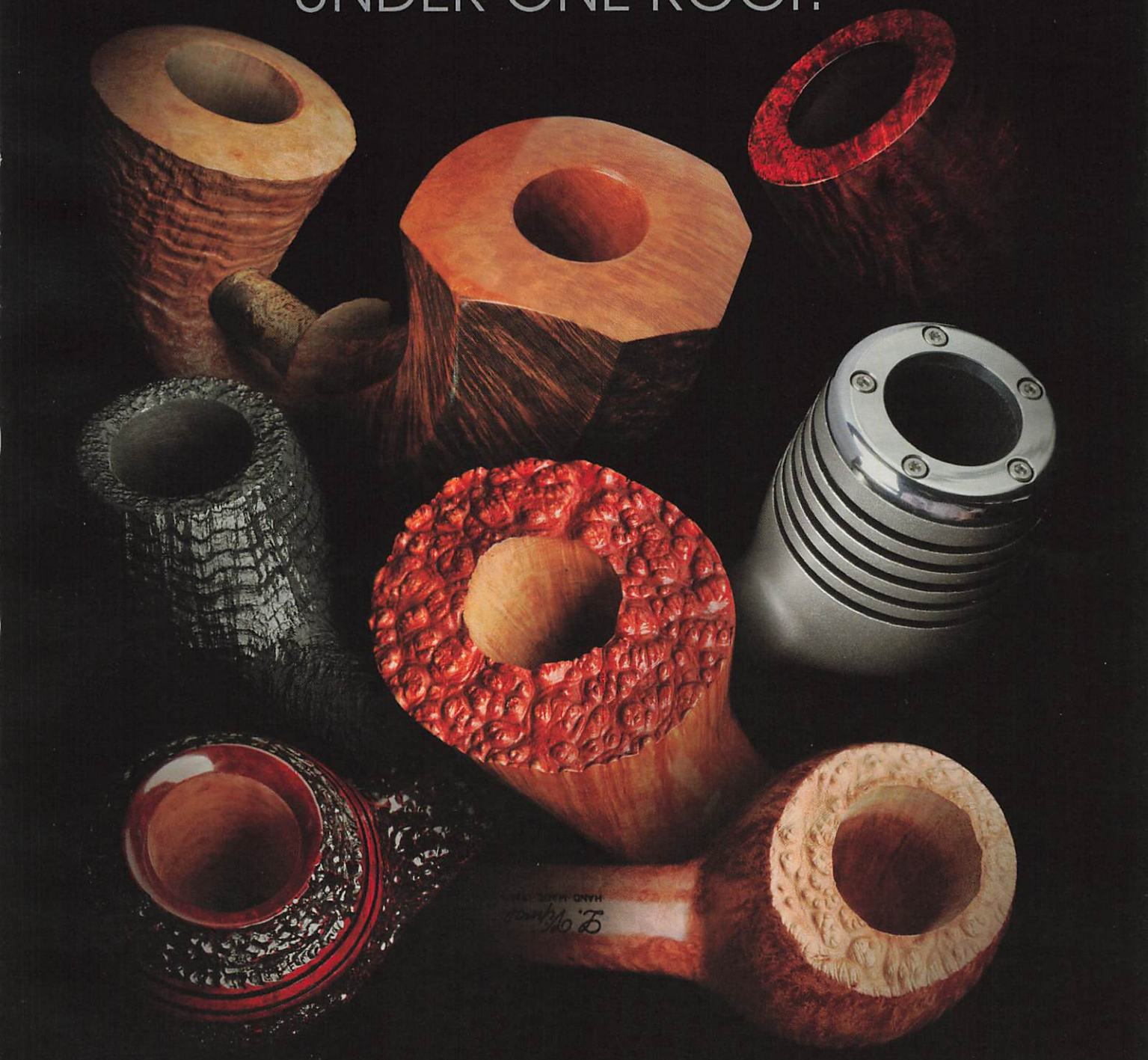


ON THE COVER

Ireland's iconic pipe, Peterson
(Photo by Chuck Stanion)

THE GREATEST SELECTION OF PIPES UNDER ONE ROOF.



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There was a change in the preliminary questions asked by a young nurse at my last medical checkup. "Have you ever smoked?" she asked.

That made me pause. I've made no secret of my smoking and that's reflected in my medical records. "Yes," I said.

"When did you quit?"

Another head-scratcher. I always reek of smoke and was surprised that this medical professional couldn't detect it. Fishmongers have sniffed the air on my approach and asked if someone is smoking.

"About 15 minutes ago, when I got out of my car."

Now it was her turn to pause. "So you're having trouble stopping smoking?" she asked.

"No. Pipes go out all the time. It's why I carry a lighter."

She was flummoxed. I had the impression I was the first smoker she'd met who wasn't contrite about smoking and anxious to be delivered from tobacco.

"I'll let the doctor know he needs to prescribe something."

"Pharmaceutical companies have enough money already. Keep your prescription."

It reminded me of a similar episode following surgery last year. I had an unusual coughing fit as I was coming out of anesthetic. The hospital staff was helpful: They said I was risking my stitches and told me to stop coughing, which I eventually did. Not being a medical professional, I'd never have found that solution myself.

Five minutes after I was wheeled out of recovery and into my hospital room, a happy, upbeat young man sauntered in and introduced himself as a respiratory therapist. "I guess you're not a smoker anymore," he said. "I brought some quit-smoking flyers."

"I'm a pipe smoker."

"But you want to quit after that coughing episode."

"You think pipe smoking caused that?"

"Of course."

"I've smoked nearly every day for 30 years and never had a coughing fit. Then today I did—right after you guys stuck tubes down my throat and forced gas into my lungs for two hours. And you think the most probable cause is …?"

"Smoking, naturally."

"You poor deluded drone. Is that the caliber of critical thinking they encourage in respiratory therapist school?"

He blinked. He seemed to expect gratitude rather than ridicule. "If you're not worried for yourself, you should know that passive smoking causes more than 50,000 deaths—"

"I've researched the subject for years. I'll be polite and wait until you're gone before destroying that rubbish—if you go away now."

He left. I've been noticing this attitude lately—the assumption that all smokers want to quit, that they recognize absolutely no value in smoking. And I see that attitude mainly from younger medical people. I think it's what they're taught in school now. It bothers me. It presupposes that I'm incapable of steering my own life and that I require intervention to appropriately alter my ignorant behavior. I especially resent the imbecilic earnestness of those employing this tired propaganda technique. They don't know they're being used to disseminate misinformation and oppress others. They don't seem to recognize that they're tools.

But I'm willing to tell them.

Chuck

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"See her?" Rejane said, pointing across the street.

On the stoop of a three-decker tenement house, a woman sat, knees up high because the step was low, hands hanging between her blue-jeaned legs, blonde hair caught back with a fabric scrunchie whose color just matched the baby-blue vinyl siding of the house behind her.

"Sonya Cara," Dupont said. "I've seen her in court. She's 23. Looks like she's 40. Works over on Grundy Boulevard by the Dominican restaurant. Heroin."

"She bought an orange soda in here when I opened up today," Rejane said. "She's waiting for a man to come sell her that warm stuff she puts in her arm. She's got money from last night."

"Putain," Dupont spit, using the French word for women who sell themselves.

Rejane rested a long-fingered hand on the back of Dupont's neck. He felt the warmth.

"So sure what you see," she said. "You look at her, you see what you write in the paper, black words.

"But she's scared to get in cars with the men," Rejane said. "She's scared and sick all the time. She tries not to remember when she was a little girl and she liked ice cream. She used to come in here 10 years ago, buy ice cream."

Rejane stroked the back of Dupont's neck.

"Some questions, no one can answer," she said. "It's almost Christmas, cher. Take your pipe and smoke it where it wants to be smoked."

Jack Dupont, glad to be out in the cold air, walked the eight blocks back to *The Standard Times*. The small tree Simone had bought him glowed on his desk.

"Two days until Christmas," Simone said to him as they ate lunch in a nearby grinder joint. "Wait'll you see what I bought you."

On Christmas Eve, *Standard Times* newsroom management decreed an early deadline and let the reporters go at 3 p.m., two hours early.

That night, Rejane had a glass of anisette before going to bed, alone in a twin bed, in the apartment over her store. Sonya Cara stood on the sidewalk in front of the Dominican restaurant, waiting for the last Christmas rush. Jack and Simone ate French cheese and drank port wine in her small apartment. She gave Dupont a tweed scarf and he gave her an antique cameo pin featuring a cat's white face in profile against a sea-green background.

Charlemagne Boisvert's pipe never returned to Dupont's apartment. It lives an untidy bachelor life among the drifts of paper that cover Dupont's desk, sometimes buried, sleeping for days.

It does not attend press conferences in air-conditioned offices. It does not go along when Dupont covers groundbreakings and junior high school science fairs.

But when the police scanner screeches that there's a shooting or a fire, a harried Dupont sweeps the papers aside with nervous hands and runs for the door with Charlemagne Boisvert's pipe in his wide, humorous mouth.

And no matter what Dupont believes, he no longer believes there's an answer to every question. P&T

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said. "You see a picture of a black guy in this paper, you can bet he's in handcuffs."

"Charlemagne Boisvert's no dope," Dupont says. "In those days, New Hampshire was far away. He translates his name into English, Charles Greenwood, lies about where he went to school, and the next day, he's an all-American reporter. The old lady, his daughter, doesn't care if I quote her."

"Good story," Simone said.

Dupont sank into his desk chair and started to type, his notebook open on the desk. Next to the notebook, the pipe rested on its side, gleaming richly in the cruel florescent light. Dupont wrote with an unlit corncob in his mouth. He bagged the seven dwarfs column and began to write Charlemagne Boisvert's story as told by his daughter, Irene.

Jack Dupont believed in the fitness of things. He didn't smoke Boisvert's pipe that day at work.

Instead, he stopped on the way home from the paper and bought a four-pack of Guinness stout in a corner store at the end of his street. He arrived in the store 10 minutes before closing time and the clerk grumbled a little at having to make one more sale.

Jack Dupont lived with his 81-year-old mother, a circumstance his friends used as a platform for jokes. When he arrived home at 10 minutes after 10, his mother was asleep, and the second-floor, five-room apartment they shared was quiet.

Dupont closed the door to his mother's room, walked into his own bedroom, changed from his work clothes into a pair of badly worn, red plaid flannel pajamas, walked into the tiny kitchen and put three cans of Guinness in the refrigerator. The fourth can he opened, pouring its contents into a pint glass emblazoned with "Guinness It's Good For You." He had stolen the glass from an Irish pub in Boston when he and Simone had gone up to the big town for a weekend last fall.

Boston was only 50 miles from Mill River, but Mill Riverites went to Boston only to see Red Sox games or to work as laborers on large, publicly funded construction projects.

"You and me walk down the street in Boston, you can almost hear the freakin' banjo music," Simone had said during their last trip to Boston. "Hey Jethro, lookit all these here tall buildings."

Dupont set the glass of Guinness carefully on a marble-topped table next to his reading chair, a mouse-colored, 10-year-old La-Z-Boy he had journeyed far into the suburbs to purchase. The only furniture you could buy within the city limits of Mill River was made of particle board and required some assembly.

The glass in place, Dupont walked back into his bedroom and, standing on tiptoe, retrieved a large cardboard box from the top shelf of his closet. He set the box on his bed and rooted among 75 brightly labeled 2-ounce tins of pipe tobacco until he found the unopened tin of Dunhill Elizabethan, no longer made, that he'd been cellaring for six years. He'd been planning to smoke it on some special occasion, perhaps when he'd finally whored up enough freelance money

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"There," Simone said. "You have your own office Christmas tree now."

Pancho Souza snickered.

Mill River, Mass., was either one of the best or one of the worst places to celebrate Christmas. An old cotton mill town with a population of 88,000, the city was a broken watch, a huddle of crap-brown 100-year-old tenements, barracks-like housing projects and huge, abandoned mills. Four thousand people had moved out in the last decade, most of them descendents of the Portuguese and French Canadian immigrants who had worked in manufacturing back in the days when Mill River made trash cans, baby clothing, cotton cloth, sport coats, yarn, table cloths, cardboard boxes and other hard goods.

The truly stubborn remained behind, unwilling to leave a neighborhood where they'd grown up, still in love with the Mill River of small bakeries and European immigrants that was vanishing so fast. The new Mill River consisted of just-arrived Dominicans, Haitians and Guatemalans who had mistakenly immigrated to a town where there was no work, African-Americans who could not find their way in the "hire your cousin" culture of Mill River and a sprinkling of Pakistanis who ran the city's numerous dollar stores and discount cigarette emporiums.

The unions were dead. Unemployment was at 14 percent. The dropout rate at the high school was 47 percent, and the city's drug of choice was heroin.

Yet, at dusk in the winter, the city looked Victorian and the trash men wired Christmas wreaths to the grilles of their trucks. The dying light at the end of the day erased the cracks in the sidewalks, and it was possible to walk out of a Dunkin' Donuts with a cup of hot chocolate and see a brightness in the lowering dark, light through church stained glass, sparkling Christmas trees in tenement windows.

Dupont and Simone were natives, first among the truly stubborn, living where they wrote, a pair of lovestruck mastodons bellowing sweetly at each other across a swamp of poverty and memory.

Simone sat at her desk, writing a story about an overweight Percocet addict who had robbed the same side-street convenience store three times in the same day.

"Too broke to have a car," she muttered.

"Jack, somebody to see you," the receptionist at the front of the newsroom said.

Dupont snorted, angry at the interruption. Dupont was the paper's columnist, and he was writing a piece comparing Mill River's city councilors to the seven dwarfs. His shift on this cold, early December day was the 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and, if no one in Mill River got mad enough to shoot, stab or beat anyone, he'd hoped to finish his weekly column.

"Sleazy, Dummy, Sloppy ...," he muttered, rising from his desk.

The woman was small, maybe 5 feet, 1 inch, and old, maybe 85. Her green eyes were large and bright, and she wore black pants and a blouse decorated with black and white geometric shapes, mostly diamonds and squares.

"Horny," Dupont said to himself, remembering that City Councilor Mike Beausoleil had recently been caught in a prostitution sting. Beausoleil paid a fine and had recently announced that he would run for reelection.

The old lady looked puzzled and not a little frightened. She was in the silent process of convincing herself that Dupont had muttered some variant of "Howdy" when he spoke.

"Howyadoin?" he said to the old woman, who looked visibly reassured.

Her name was Irene Greenwood and she held a small cardboard box in her hand.

"Hello, Mr. Dupont," she said. "My father was Charles Greenwood."

One of the things Dupont did for *The Standard Times* was produce a weekly "history blog," an item that appeared only on the paper's website and featured snippets of Mill River history collected by Dupont from the huge black-bound volumes of the paper's archives. These volumes went back to 1861, all of them in disarray on the shelves of a locked room on the paper's otherwise-empty fourth floor, where they were succumbing to the nibbling of mice, the smaller nibbling of bugs, neglect and humidity.

"You wrote about my father," the woman said.

Dupont remembered. Greenwood had written a column for *The Standard Times* back in the 1920s and Dupont had excerpted that column in his blog.

"Nobody remembers this guy," he had told Simone. "He was good. He's got a whole column about how poor kids used to go downtown to beg from the businessmen."

"If they went downtown now, they'd have to beg from junkies," Simone had said.

Dupont solicitously ushered the woman into *The Standard Times'* grandly named conference room, a sterile space of beige walls and a cheap laminate table surrounded by faux-leather chairs.

After 15 minutes, Dupont came out, took a reporter's notebook and a pen off his desk and went back into the conference room. An hour later, Dupont walked the old woman to the elevator and thanked her for the cardboard box he held in his right hand.

"Looka this," he said to Simone, opening the box and removing a short, dark, billiard-shaped pipe.

"She brought me her father's pipe," Dupont said. "Because I been writing about him. She brought me a story, too."

Simone took the dark red pipe in her pale hands, trailing one purple-painted fingernail down the stem.

"It's nice," she said. "What's the story?"

"Charles Greenwood's real name was Charlemagne Boisvert," Dupont said. "In 1910, he comes down here from Nashua, New Hampshire. Self-educated. He's been writing for a French-language paper up north.

"But," Dupont said, "at *The Standard*, the reporters are all Irish and the management are all from the old Yankee families that own the mills. They don't even cover the news in French neighborhoods, not unless it's a stabbing or a guy beating his wife."

"Which is pretty much what we do in black neighborhoods," Simone

BY MARC MUNROE DION

Jack Dupont was not a true believer in much of anything. As a reporter, he felt that strong belief led to the dusty, parched intersection of shortsightedness and bias.

But he believed a few things. A partial list follows.

1. The short sentence is best.
2. Inanimate objects have no soul.
3. Neither do newspaper publishers.
4. Approached properly, the saints will intercede with God.
5. No real man drinks anything with more than two ingredients.
6. Ice counts.

Dupont toiled for *The Mill River Standard Times*, a daily newspaper with a circulation of 14,000 and an audible wheeze in its editorial policy. He was a 53-year-old son of Mill River, a man given to spoken obscenity and gray fedoras, tweed jackets and side-of-the-mouth laughter. A tall man with a mustache the color of shredded Latakia, he walked with his head down but swiftly, loping between City Council meetings and the newspaper office where, on a Tuesday, three weeks before Christmas, he was to receive two gifts.

"I got it at Target," Simone LaCroix said, handing Dupont a plastic bag.

LaCroix, 41, and extremely fond of cats, was Dupont's girlfriend and fellow reporter. She was 5 feet, 2 inches tall, with a mass of curly hair dyed an arresting blonde. On the day she presented Dupont with the plastic bag, she was wearing a lilac leather mini skirt, black pantyhose and a black sweater with a huge, floppy cowl neck that neatly framed her pale, sharp-nosed face. Her fingernails were painted purple.

Simone raised one foot off the ground as Dupont removed a 5-inch Christmas tree from the bag. Behind her, Pancho Souza, *Standard Times* photographer and Dupont's best friend, stared fixedly at the shelf of Simone's rear before turning back to a computer screen on which a picture of Mill River's rotund, thieving mayor awaited cropping.

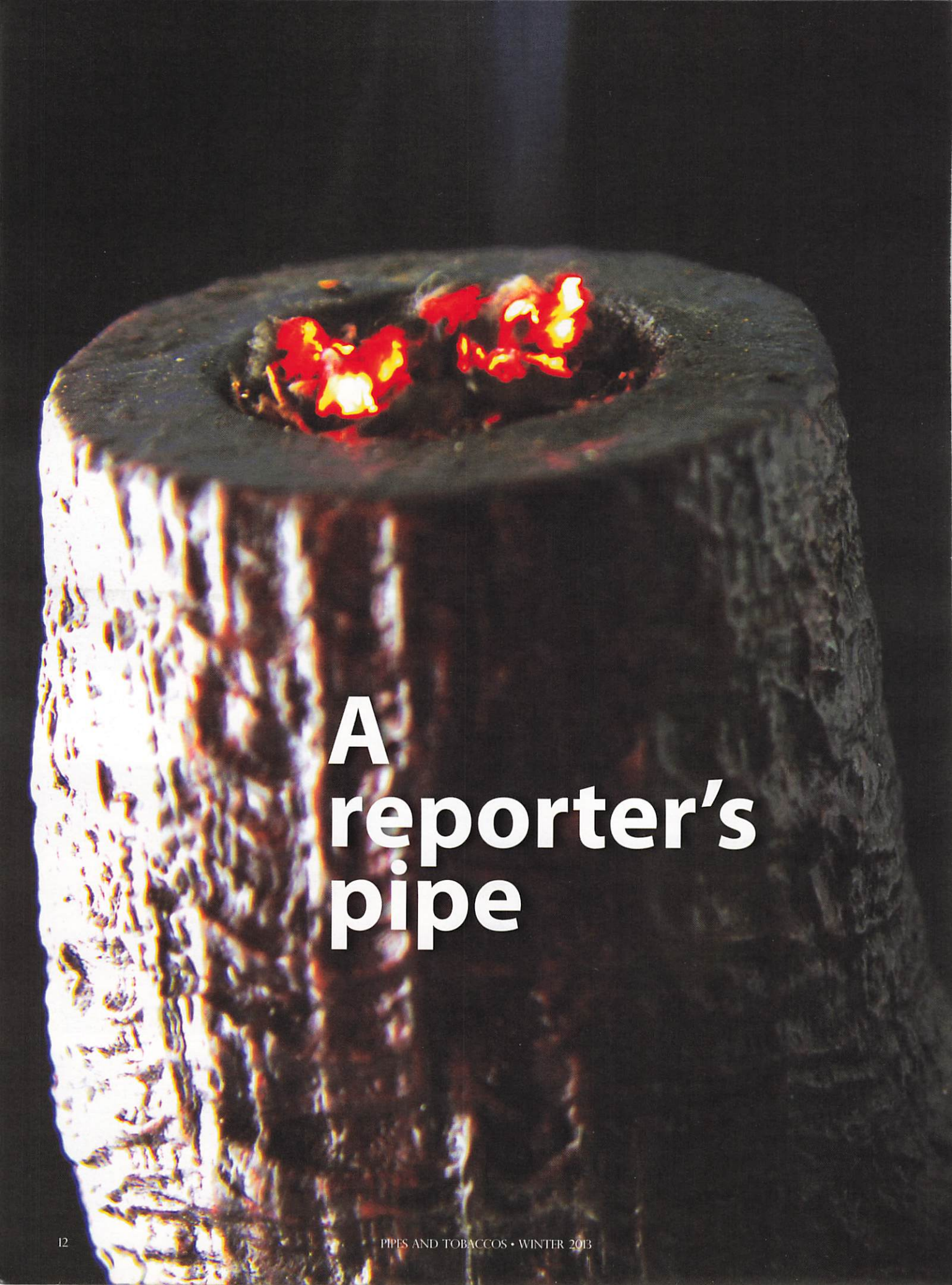
Simone took the little tree from Dupont's hands.

"You plug it into your computer like this," she said, pushing aside some of the news and fast-food-related landfill that covered Dupont's desk.

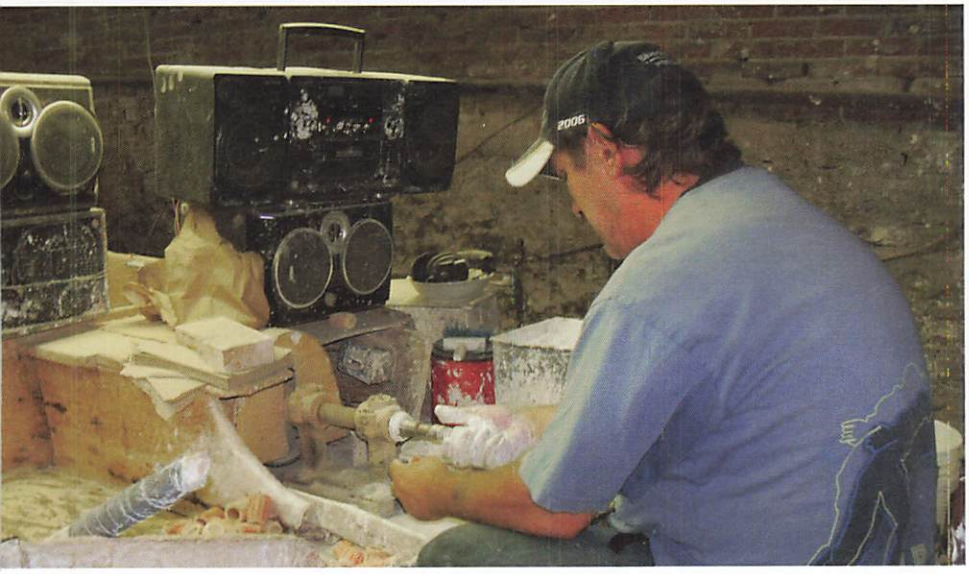
The little tree lit up, seven lights, four red, three green. Dupont leaned back until his desk chair creaked.

"Niiiice," he said.

Dupont, who looked like nothing so much as a second-rate, small-town bookie, loved Christmas as small boys love the holiday. On Thanksgiving, he broke out a Zippo with Santa Claus on the side. Throughout the season, he wore loud silk ties emblazoned with elves and snowmen. He sang carols in the office. In short, he was a tinseled nuisance, a trial to a roomful of reporters who called themselves "journalists," and strove, as the Internet ate their business, to appear cynical and world weary. ▶



A reporter's pipe

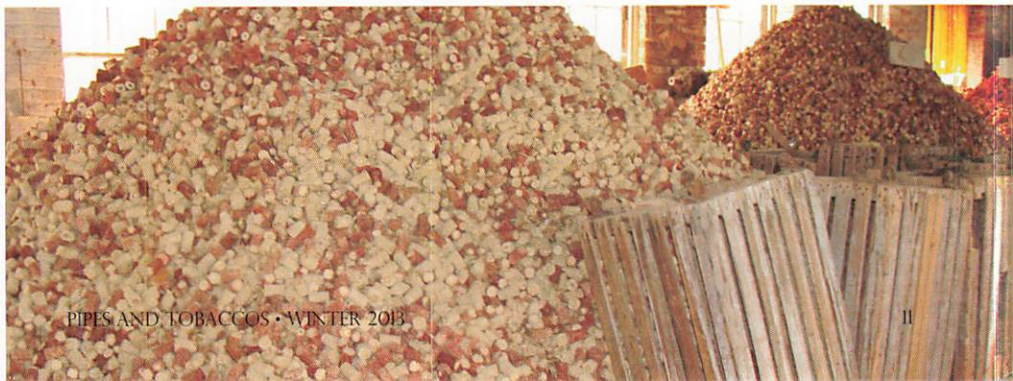


Above left, Tim Schwartz applies plaster of paris to the bowls. At right, Craig Haddox performs white scouring, which is a hand-sanding process, to smooth the plaster.

phisticated smoke shops peddling $500 briar pipes, where Missouri Meerschaum products are kept hidden away in corners, there is an unfounded perception that corncobs don't smoke well. Quite the contrary. Corncobs actually deliver quite a cool and neutral smoke, unsullied by the flavors of wood. Morgan believes the pipes are a good fit for the first-time smoker just getting started with limited finances. "He can acquire three pipes for $20 and establish a real rotation," Morgan notes. He also believes that corncobs are a perfect venue for experimentation. "You can try out a new tobacco in a corncob without ghosting a briar pipe," says Morgan.

Smoking is legal in the old factory in Washington, and Morgan can be found with a corncob most days firmly tucked between his teeth. But he worries about the future when he notices that many of his employees, who were once cob smokers, are more likely to be puffing on cigarettes, if anything. He also worries about the next corn harvest and the search for new accounts to build future revenues. His goal, with better crops, is to get back to selling 1 million pipes a year. In the meantime, he isn't reluctant to tout Missouri Meerschaum's Americana image. "We're real home-grown survivors here in the heartland," he concludes. P&T

Here Charlene Stawski applies labels to the bottoms of bowls. Below are birch stems on the left with metal ferrules on the right, and at bottom, piles of cobs that have been cut into sections and await manufacturing.



Peggy Nevills seals the insertion point where stem meets bowl, a process completed on every pipe to ensure an air-tight seal.

Mike Axton drills the tobacco hole in the cobs.

few years later. In 1988 a trio of investors—Michael Lechtenberg, Robert Moore and Larry Horton—took it over, and they've remained the owners ever since. All are in their 60s and 70s and, oddly, are rarely involved in the business. Lechtenberg carries the title of president but does not live in the area and, as Morgan explains it, "lets us run the company ourselves. I talk to him perhaps twice a year."

Missouri Meerschaum has benefited from a longstanding following within the military: In addition to MacArthur, Gen. John J. Pershing smoked corncobs in World War I, and both Omar Bradley and Dwight Eisenhower smoked them in World War II. Missouri Meerschaum was considered a staple at military base commissaries. Adm. Richard Byrd took corncobs to the North Pole. In addition to Mark Twain, both Rudyard Kipling and Norman Rockwell smoked corncobs. So did generations of rural farmers.

At one point in the 1920s, there were a bevy of competitors in and around Washington, a placid town of 14,000 that was known in its industrial heyday for two products: pipes and shoes. Names like Union Pipe Co., National Cob Pipe Works and Missouri Corn Cob Pipe Co. flourished for a long while, but Missouri Meerschaum always dominated the marketplace, with more than half of all sales. In the '50s its rivals began dropping off. Missouri bought out its last remaining competitor, Hirschl & Bendheim, some 30 years ago, and has remained the sole corncob survivor ever since.

The production of a cob pipe starts with the corn. Missouri Meerschaum has owned its own farm, on 150 acres 15 miles west of the factory, since the 1970s, to control production. The company uses special heirloom hybrid red and white feed corn seeds, then plants its field at 15,000 seeds per acre—half the usual density—to yield uncommonly large cobs (up to 2 inches in diameter) with a very dense, hard core. The corn is picked late, then brought by employees to sprawling cribs before it's shelled (the corn kernels are food grade and sold to grain mills).

In a good year the company harvests 2 million cobs. The cobs lie in the cribs for additional drying, then are sawed into sections, with each cob usually good for two or three sections. Then the bowl is drilled out of the middle of each cob section (the center is the soft pith, surrounded by a woody ring that is just right for the walls of the bowl). Then the cobs are attached to 80-year-old lathes that perform the shaping.

About 15 percent of all pipes are left natural, while the rest are finished with a simple plaster of paris (from an 1880s recipe) and varnish that result in a smooth exterior. The stem hole is then drilled and a birch stem, along with either a plastic or vulcanite mouthpiece, is inserted by employees working in the assembly room.

About 5 percent of the pipes, many of them miniatures, have custom imprints on the side. Some 20 percent are destined for export, with major markets concentrated in Japan, Germany and Scandinavia. The biggest U.S. customers are the large pharmacy chains. Distributors account for much of the rest of the U.S. volume.

There are only 16 shapes in all, with names like Legend, Missouri Pride, Great Dane, Diplomat and Country Gentleman. The MacArthur model is aptly dubbed the Mac. Morgan has ideas for change. He'd like to bring back a long-discontinued barrel shape called the Jewel, which sold for 25 cents in the 1950s (when a gross of 144 pipes sold at wholesale for $13.50!). He also wants to bring back bulldog and churchwarden styles once marketed by the company, and might even consider a panel design. "We'd also like to bring back pencil-thin reed stems, though they aren't easy to hold in your mouth," Morgan says.

In some quarters, particularly so-

story factory employed a workforce of 125. This year the company will produce about 700,000 pipes, retailing between $5 and $10 in most places, with a workforce of 35, a reduction partly due to decreased availability of large cobs.

The company faces plenty of challenges. Anti-smoking campaigns have helped persuade some big retailers, such as Wal-Mart, to drop the line, while other accounts, like Walgreens, continue to carry them. A modern era of urban and suburban smokers is far more likely to light up briar pipes these days. Meanwhile, corn harvests, plagued by hot weather and poor yields, have been so bad that Missouri Meerschaum's inventory of blank cobs fell to near-historic lows. However, more recent harvests have been better.

"When I started here in 2009, our sales hit a low point of 600,000 pipes for the year," Morgan, an accountant from outside the pipe industry recruited to run daily operations, says. "Much lower than that, and we would not still be here today."

And yet Morgan, who is 60, is working to reverse the long decline. For the first time in years, the company is displaying its products at all the tobacco industry's top trade shows. It's also hired a marketing firm from nearby St. Louis and started advertising for the first time in two decades, with regular promotions appearing in trade journals such as *Tobacco Outlet Business* and *Tobacco Retailer*.

What helps keep the company going is a rising consumer admiration for all things made in the United States. "This is a genuine American product. Both corn and tobacco are native to the Americas," points out Morgan. "You can't get more authentic than a corncob pipe. That image is resonating with consumers right now."

Missouri Meerschaum was founded in Washington, located about an hour's drive west of St. Louis, in 1869 by a Dutch immigrant, Henry Tibbe, who was a master wood turner. Farmers and trappers of the era asked him to begin fashioning the plentiful corncobs in the region into pipes. They were also smoking pipes made from the wood of cherry trees and river birch, but it was corncobs that proved to be the most resilient. The corncobs were so neutral and cool-smoking, in fact, that they reminded Tibbe of the meerschaum clay that pipemakers in Turkey were using. His company, originally called H. Tibbe & Son, officially became the Missouri Meerschaum Co. in 1907.

Ownership changed hands in 1912 when Edmund Henry Otto took over; his family ran the company for more than 50 years. The business was sold in the late 1970s, and then again a

BY H. LEE MURPHY

Cobs are king

Missouri Meerschaum is iconically all-American

Those stark wire service photos of Gen. Douglas MacArthur trudging ashore in the Philippines during World War II, aviator sunglasses perched above an enormous corncob pipe, were an essential spark in igniting a rise in pipe smoking and the continued success of the Missouri Meerschaum Co. in the years that followed. But the carefully staged moment almost didn't happen, and who knows how American pipemaking might have been different as a result?

As Philip Morgan, the general manager of Missouri Meerschaum, recounts it, the publicity-conscious MacArthur was hoping sometime in the 1930s to find a distinctive look that would make him recognizable to millions of Americans on the pages of magazines like *Life* and *Look*. A cigarette smoker, he chose an extra-long holder that people would always remember. Then the country elected a president, Franklin Roosevelt, who beat MacArthur to the punch with a jauntily perched long cigarette holder of his own.

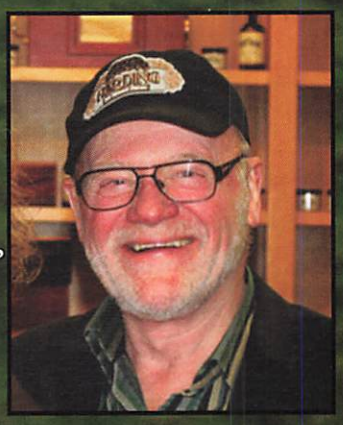
MacArthur had an aide who happened to have grown up in Union, Mo., just a few miles south of the country's corncob pipe capital of Washington, Mo. The aide put the general in touch with Missouri Meerschaum, the largest of a dozen or so pipemakers in the area, which agreed to fashion a customized creation. MacArthur drew the outline of a supersized pipe—a corncob on steroids, with an enormous 5-inch-deep bowl and long reed stem—that forever became his trademark. For Missouri Meerschaum today, nearly 50 years after the general's death, the design continues to be popular.

Pat and Phil Morgan and office manager Marilyn Lanning (right) stand in front of a display from the 1904 World's Fair held in St. Louis. Some of the pipes in the display are much older than 1904 and feature reed stems and bone mouthpieces.

The MacArthur-style pipes, in fact, are made on some of the same lathes and drill presses, dating from the 1920s, that shaped the general's originals. And they're made in the same dusty old red-brick factory along the banks of the Missouri River that has housed the company since Mark Twain (another Missouri Meerschaum customer when he wasn't smoking Petersons) was penning *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in the 1870s. Even the corn shelling is done on an antique John Deere machine dating to the Dust Bowl era of the Great Depression.

Much has changed, however, in the world of smoking around Missouri Meerschaum, which struggled a couple of years ago in the middle of the recession as sales volumes dropped. At its peak sometime in the 1940s, Missouri Meerschaum produced 25 million pipes a year, and its three-

Nording Pipes



Erik Nording

These great Danish briars are comfortable and smoke beautifully! Many different finishes highlight this well made line of pipes. Erik Nørding was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. Originally educated in engineering, he began carving pipes as a hobby, but as time went by he became more interested in pipe making as a profession. During the last 50 years Erik Nørding has built his own business, which today produces approximately 50,000 pipes a year, 90% of which are for the export market.

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P&T Readers RESPOND

Censor the censors

I'm a creature of habit. I get up at a specific time each morning, make coffee, cook two eggs over easy, make some toast and enjoy my breakfast. After cleaning up the dishes, I go to my home office, fill a pipe with Dunhill London Mixture and sit in my chair to read the paper. Typically, it's a relaxing routine that prepares me for the day, but a story appearing in my local paper last week caused me to just about bite through the stem of my BBB Christmas pipe—an anti-smoking do-gooder has published an edition of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," and removed any references to Santa smoking a pipe.

According to the publisher, Pamela McColl, a children's advocate and smoking-cessation coach, Santa Claus smoking a pipe could influence children to take up smoking, so, acting in the children's best interests, she removed the lines:

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

Apparently, this is not the first time McColl has intruded on intellectual property to impose her smoke-free vision on the public. She is also involved in efforts to convince Hollywood directors to avoid filming smoking scenes in their movies.

Are children so vulnerable to outside influences that they must be protected from any and all behaviors that someone might find to be offensive or harmful? If so, how will they even be able to go out in public? Should we just close our children up into isolation booths until they reach adulthood? Better yet—let's just remove all the potential dangers from society altogether. Ban Thomas Nast's classic artwork depicting Santa smoking his pipe. Let's be sure to parse all books and remove any language that might be offensive.

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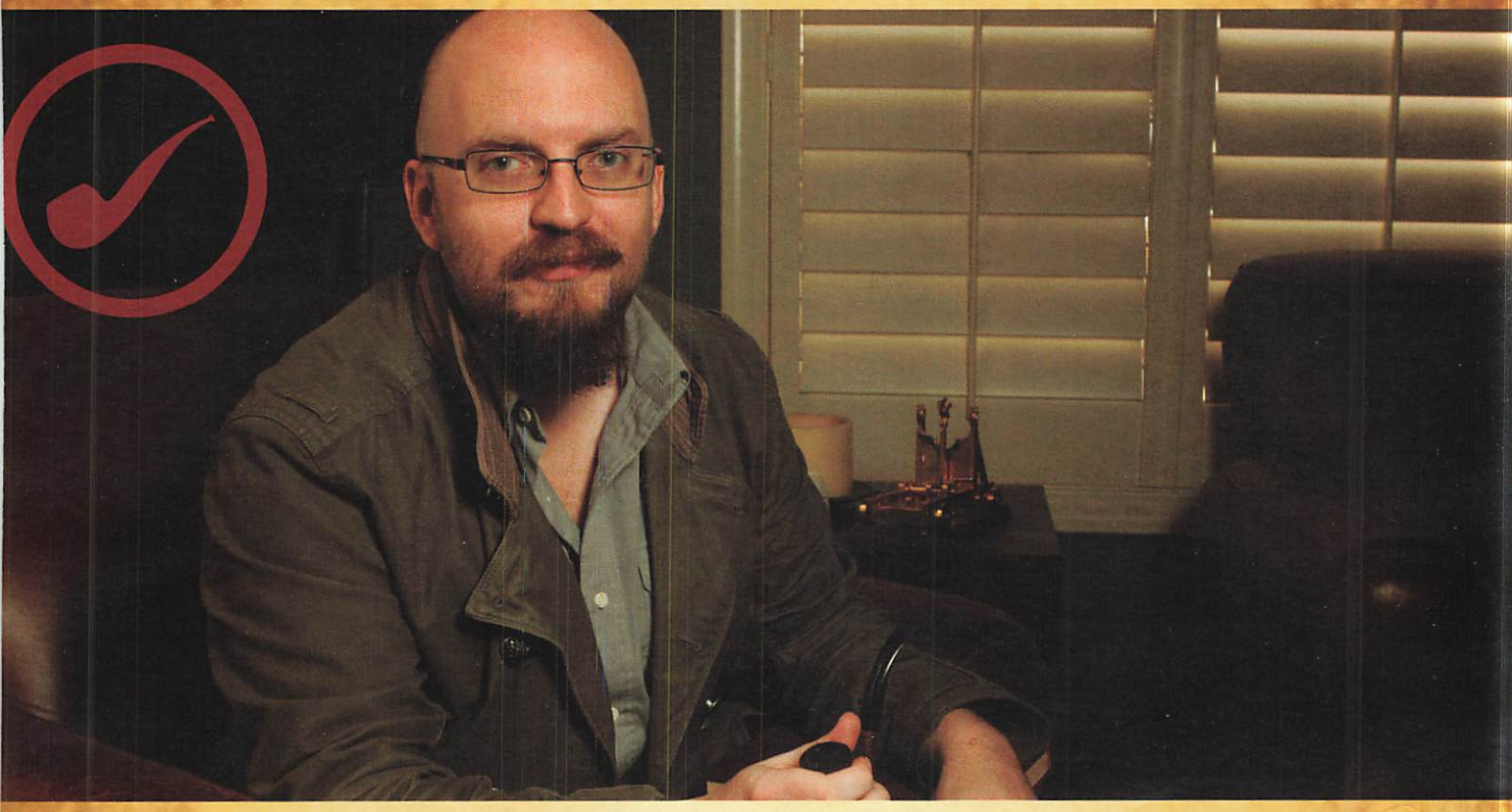

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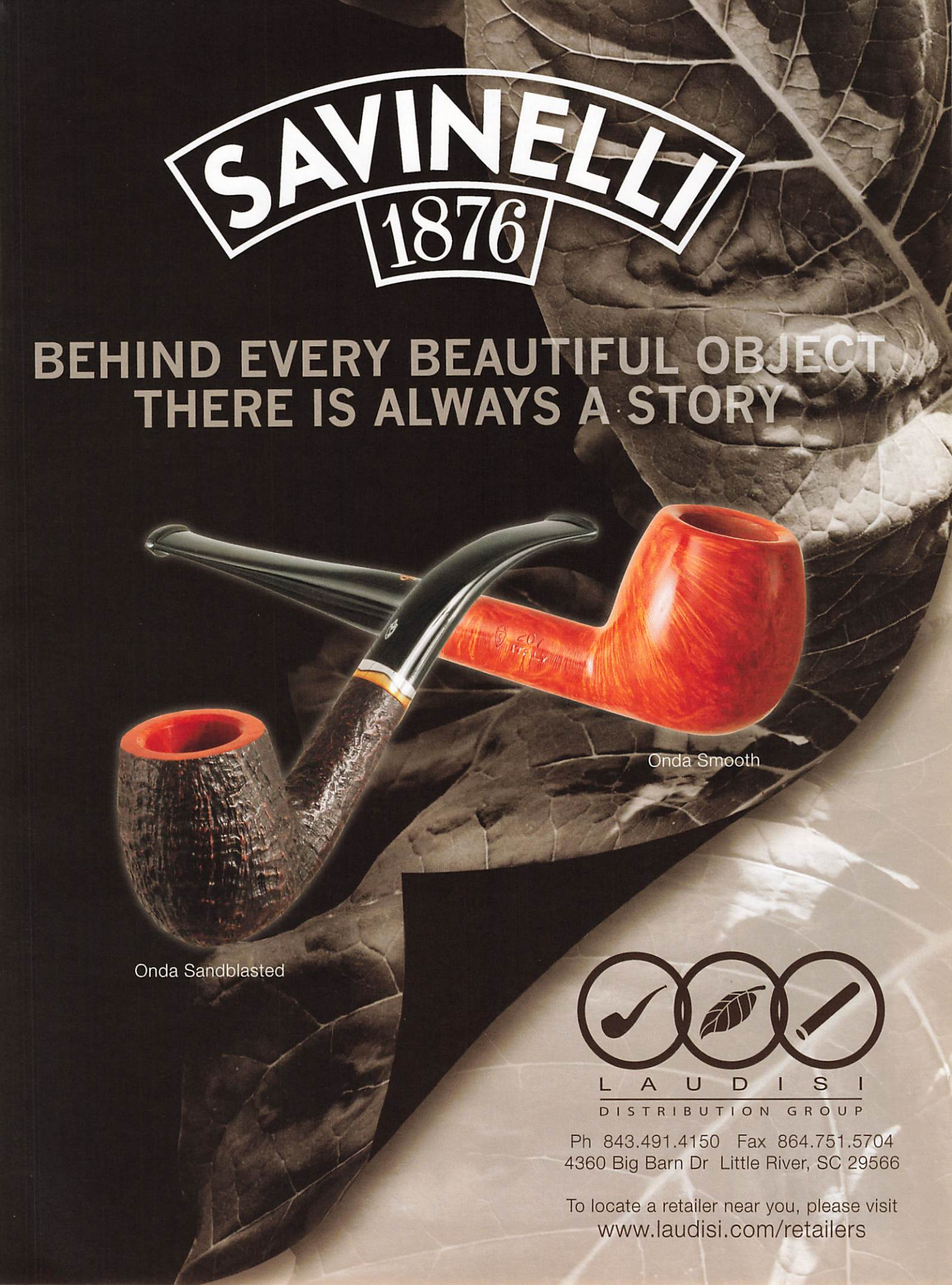
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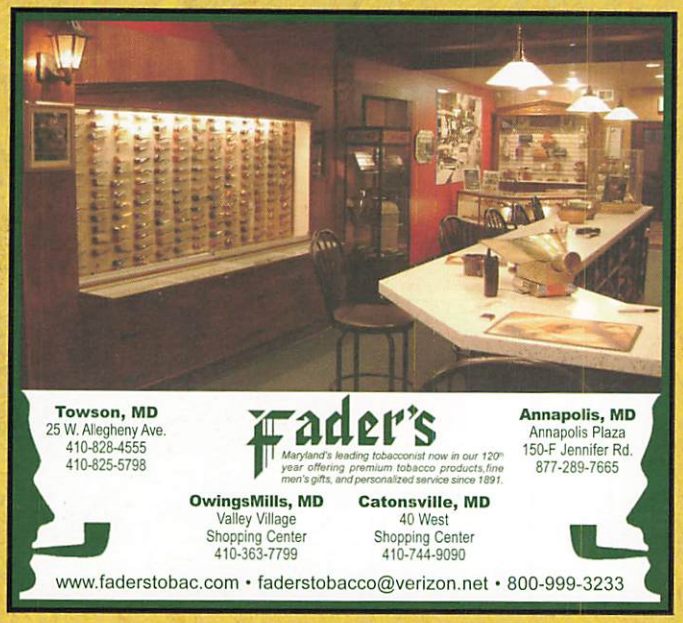
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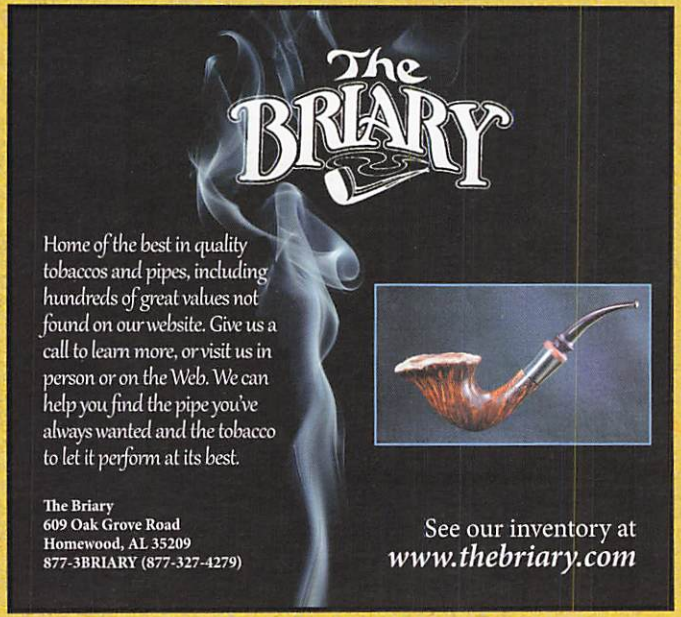
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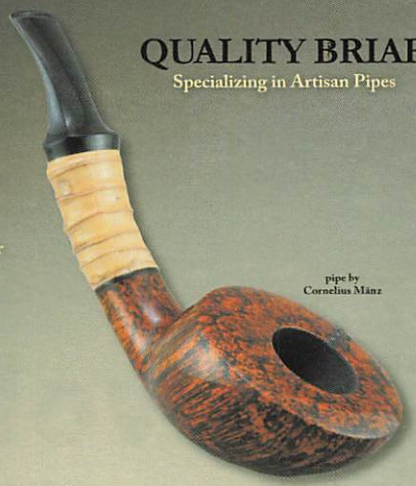

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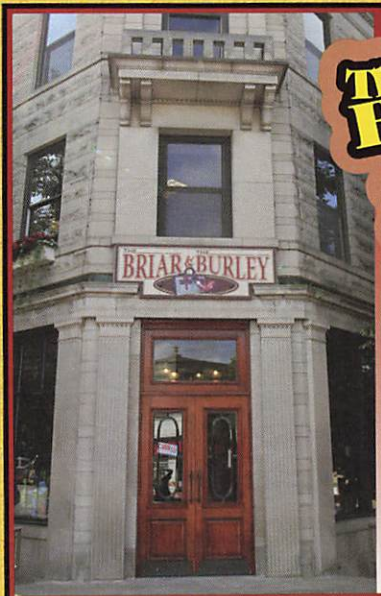

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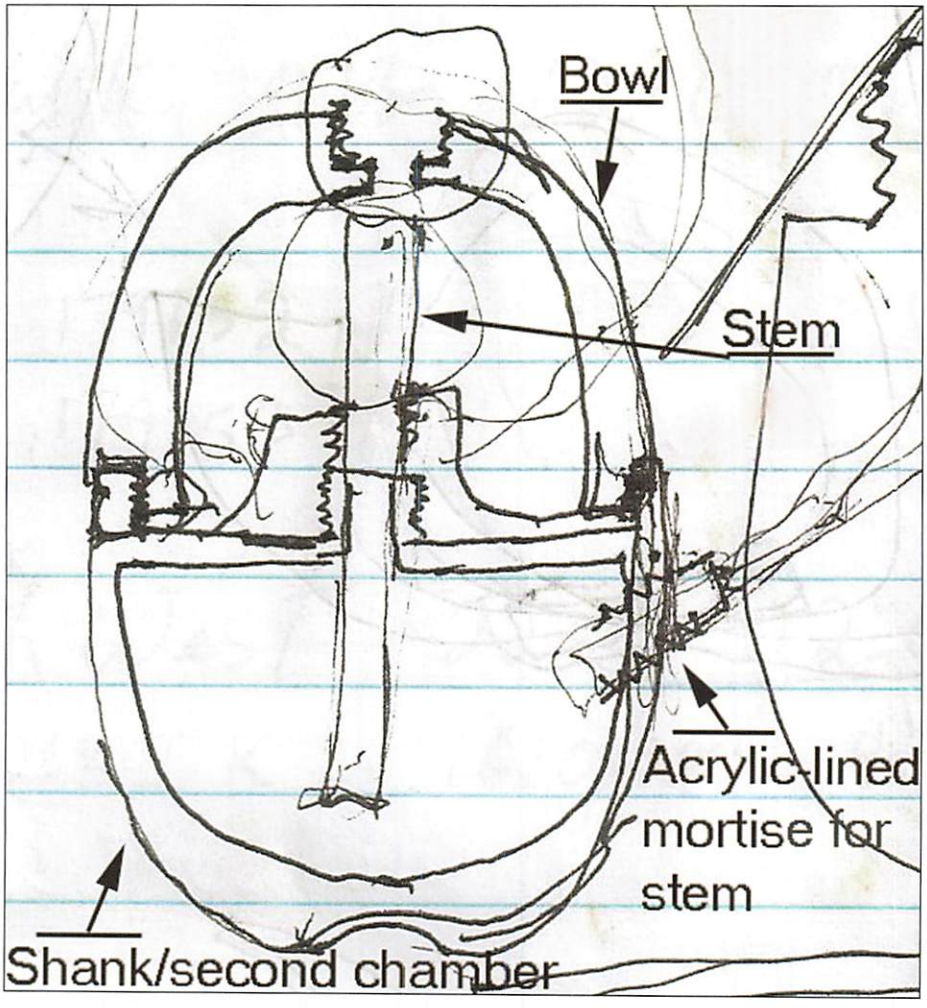
BY ANTHONY HARRIS

The evolution of an idea

Inspiration is only the beginning

The 2011 Las Vegas pipe show had just ended, and a group of us were sitting around some tables on the edge of a concourse, lined on one side by places of business and by strident slot machines on the other. Despite the noise and people walking by, we formed a little island of comfort, beer and tobacco smoke.

There were a number of active conversations in our group—most rambling from topic to topic. We talked about wind caps for pipes. A nifty old pipe lighter was handed around. We took up an earlier discussion about making a BaccyFlap (a compact, hard-shell tobacco container). I felt there were problems with the idea—cost and the fact that wood tends to suck moisture out of tobacco being foremost. Despite what seemed like significant problems, I agreed to make a prototype.



Final drawing from Las Vegas

It is not always easy to assemble a group of people willing to discuss ideas about pipe construction to any depth. This is particularly true if what is needed is more than, "I like that shape" or, "Sure hangs well" or, "Great grain." This group was different. Not one to lose an opportunity, I dug out my notebook and started showing and talking about designs for modular pipes, an idea I had been considering. Primarily, I was thinking about ways to incorporate more than a single air chamber into a pipe.

As the evening wore on, my thoughts kept returning to the BaccyFlap. If one was going to go to the trouble and expense of carrying a BaccyFlap, there needed to be a similarly portable pipe to go with it—a BaccyPipe.

What qualities would be necessary for the BaccyPipe? As noted, it would need to be compact. It would need a sleek outside so it wouldn't snag going in or coming out of a pocket. It would need to be tough to survive the vicissitudes of the pocket—something you didn't have to be careful with. And, it would have to be a *real* pipe—not a gimmick like some pocketable pipes, but one that would be practical and smoke as well as any pipe.

I started thinking out loud about some of the ideas. Discussion ensued. We talked

about twisty parts, folding thingies and hinges. None of it sounded very exciting. There had to be another way. Something that hadn't been tried.

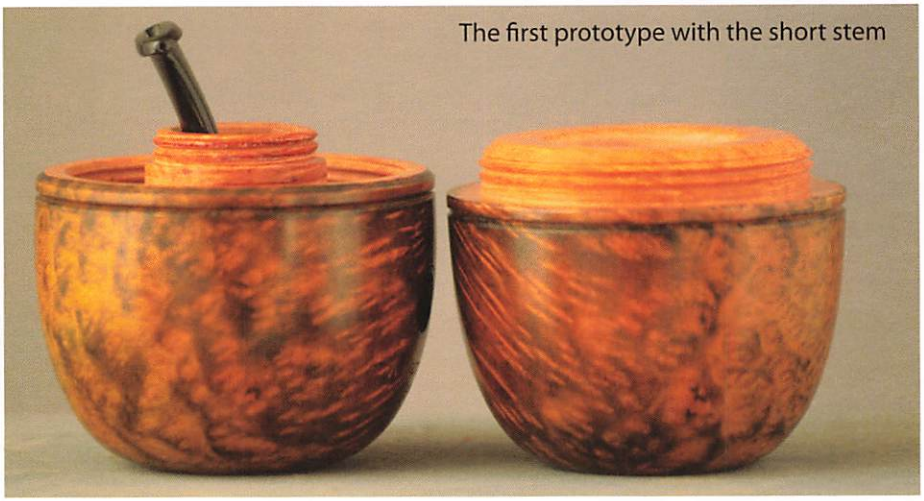
An idea began to form. I started envisioning something modular. Heck, it wasn't a big leap; we had already been talking about modularity, and the drawings in my notebook were still sitting right in front of me. Nothing for it, the stem and shank were going to have to fit inside the pipe. The pipe was going to have to contain itself!

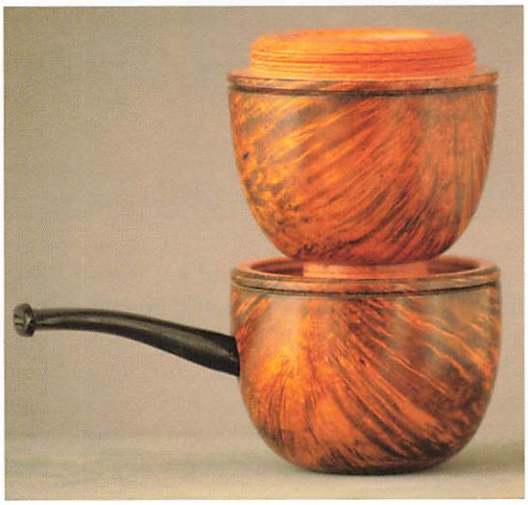
With growing excitement, I started describing the as-yet-vague idea. My eyes may have started bugging out about this time, but I did not froth at the mouth, and I will deny it if anyone says differently. I wasn't getting the enthusiastic responses I wanted from the others, so, words obviously failing, I started drawing pictures. Then we started talking again. There was some give and take, both pro and con, but I think if the process had been democratic, the idea would have been voted out of office then and there.

Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on your perspective, the pen was in my hand and the bit in my teeth. The witches' brew of images in my head started coalescing into a final form and an order of construction. I quit talking—I hope I wasn't rude but I don't remember now—and made a final drawing.

The pipe would resemble an egg when in the stowed configuration, and, well, something rather different when deployed. The bowl would have a male thread on the top and a female thread on the bottom. The shank, or second chamber, would have a female thread to receive the bowl in the stowed configuration, and a male thread on an extended tenon for the bowl when deployed. The stem's mortise in the shank would be lined with an acrylic sleeve. The importance of the sleeve would be to permit the stem to be removed while the pipe was still hot, and to lend strength to the wall of the lower chamber, made thin to reduce weight. The stem would be a press-fit, but have a thread about halfway along its length so that it would be fixed in place while stowed. In order to deploy the pipe for use, the container would be opened and the stem extracted, the bowl inverted and screwed onto the tenon on top of the shank, and the stem fitted into place.

I sat back, pleased with the drawing. I knew it wasn't pretty, but it was enough from which to build a prototype. The only part of it I wasn't comfortable with was the two threads on top of the shank. It was a complicated structure with little room for mistakes. I showed it to the others and responses ranged from enthusiastic to dubious. From another side of the table I heard, "Uh huh, now let's see you make it." Oh, my. Perhaps still a little bug-eyed, I averred that I would make one before the week was out.

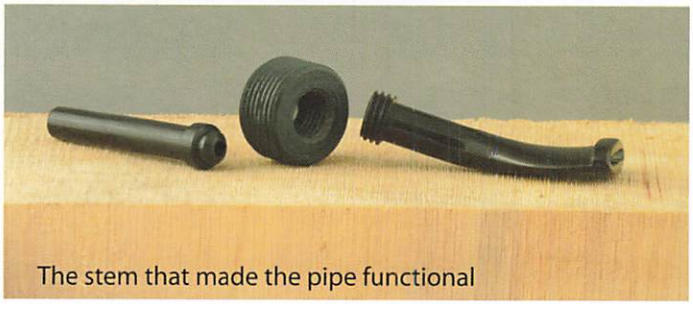

The first prototype with the short stem



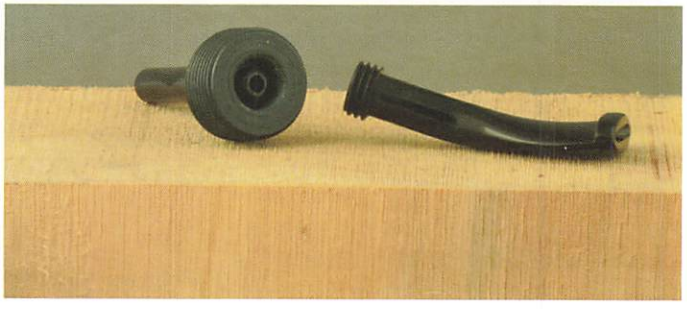
Arriving home the next afternoon, I settled back into the real world. There were a number of orders waiting to be filled that I had put off while preparing to go to Las Vegas. Even while I was running through them (not all turning requires one's full attention), I was thinking about the Baccy-Pipe.

I could see a necessary change already. The original idea was to thread the stem into the inside of the pipe when in the stowed configuration. A thread exposed to the smoke in the passage between bowl and shank was going to gunk up—nothing practical about that. Fixing the stem in place was not strictly necessary—it would sit loose inside the pipe just fine. I didn't see any way to get rid of the complication on top of the shank, though. The order of operations necessary to turn a complex object can be pretty important, and various permutations played through my mind.

I finally reached the point where I couldn't bear to put it off any longer and went looking for a chunk of briar I was willing to sacrifice. I finished the first version Thursday evening. I knew it was only a version because, in order to put the stem inside the pipe in its stowed configuration, the stem had to be this little, short, dinky thing. Nobody wants their thing to be short and dinky, and this was an extreme example. Man, it was embarrassing. I knew before I made it that the stem wasn't going to work when I saw how little space there was inside the pipe in its stowed configuration. I pressed on as I didn't immediately see how to make it longer without sacrificing the original intent, and there had to be something to show before the week was out. ▶



The stem that made the pipe functional

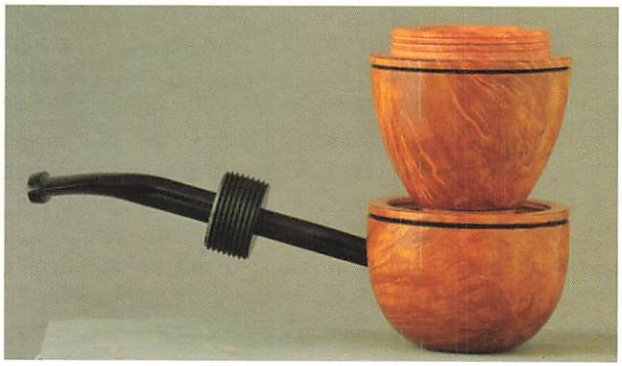


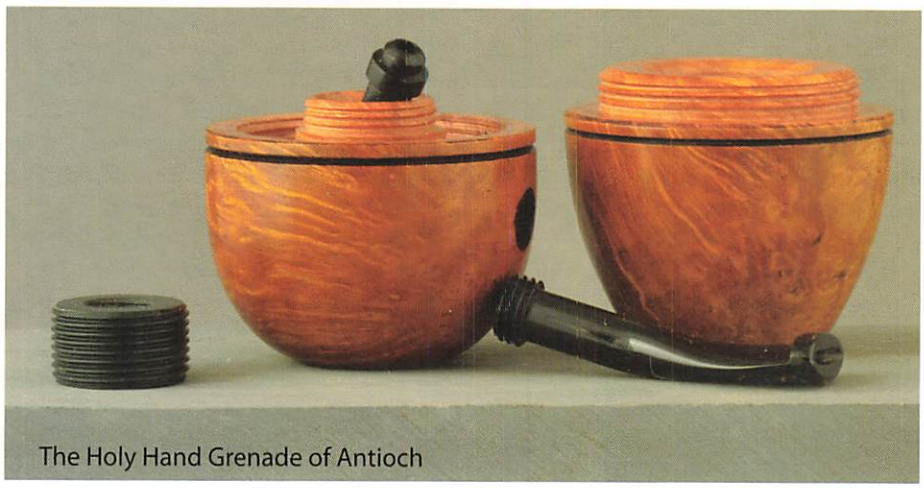
I was feeling dubious about it. I wasn't interested in making a gimmick. Perhaps it wasn't going to work. Maybe the whole idea wasn't as good as I had thought—some ideas are like that.

The best part of a month went by, and I came to the conclusion that the way to lengthen the stem was to make it out of two pieces. The joint worried me. The two pieces of the stem were going to have to be thin if they were going to fit into the opening at the top of the shank. I was concerned about how strong the joint would be. I drew some more pictures and then went back to the lathe.

The heck with two pieces; I made the stem out of three pieces—two pieces of stem and a compression nut to keep the joint between them airtight and strong. In the exploratory stages of the multipart stem idea, I left the compression nut oversized, thinking I would later cut facets on it.

I had a stem that was long enough, but I had created two new problems. I didn't dare make the stem pieces thin enough to fit through the opening into the shank. So, if they were going to be stored internally, it was the opening into the shank that must be enlarged, which meant the diameter of the whole pipe would have to be increased. Bad. Also, now I had to find a place to put the compression nut.

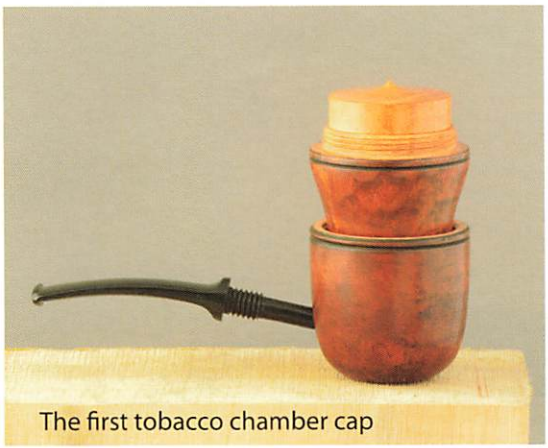




The Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch

Luckily, solutions for the new problems didn't take long. There was an exposed female thread on the bottom of the tobacco chamber that bothered me. Just a place to collect pocket fuzz or get damaged—a problem waiting to happen, so I reduced the diameter of the compression nut and chased a thread on the outside of it. Two problems solved—the compression nut screwed into the bottom of the bowl and protected the female thread. The compression nut was already threaded to fit half of the stem for deployment, and the same thread served to hold it when stowed. Thus was born the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch.

Good and bad, I thought. It was still



The first tobacco chamber cap

fairly compact. It was functional. It was kind of cute in an ugly duckling sort of way. It was made of five pieces, and it turned out no one could put it together without a demonstration. (Some cast aside the utterly marvelous Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch name and started calling it the Puzzle Pipe. Go figure.) It had geek appeal. On the downside, it wasn't really as compact as intended, and there were more complicated pieces than in the original design.

An idea remained that some people wanted a cap on the bowl. A cap appeared to have a few possible functions. One was the option to carry the pipe already loaded with tobacco. Second, it would be possible to cap a half-finished bowl without risking loose ash in the pocket. Third was its potential modification for use as a wind cap. Of course putting a cap on the tobacco chamber in the stored configuration created its own set of problems. The stem was intended to be stored in the internal space created by the bowl and shank when in the stowed configuration. A cap on the tobacco chamber interrupted the space and left the formerly stored half of the stem out in the cold.

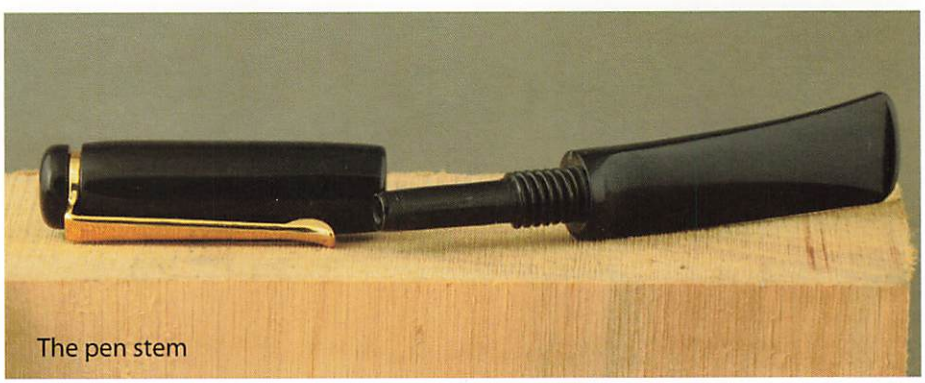
Still, I had to give it a try—you never have to make more than one example of an idea, but you *do* have to make one. An additional thread was required to put a cap on the tobacco chamber. Also, the tenon and male thread on the top of the shank had to go, as they competed for space with the cap. The top of the shank became easier to make. New problems were created, however: The new male thread at the bottom of the bowl was fragile and exposed. Also, where was the compression nut and the other half of the stem going to go?

All but one of the problems with the stem were solved by externalizing it. I made a cap such as is found on a fountain pen and screwed a single-piece stem into it. The stem could then be clipped into a breast pocket. It worked fairly well, but the original intent had been violated. The parts of the pipe no longer formed a single unit in either the stowed or deployed configurations. Nobody wants their parts to get lost. Maybe I wouldn't have to make too many pipes this way.

I think Mimmo (of Romeo Briar) must have searched his whole inventory, looking for pieces of briar of just a shape and size for me. I made five or six of the pipes just in time, and packed into the car with some buddies for the trip to the Chicago pipe show.

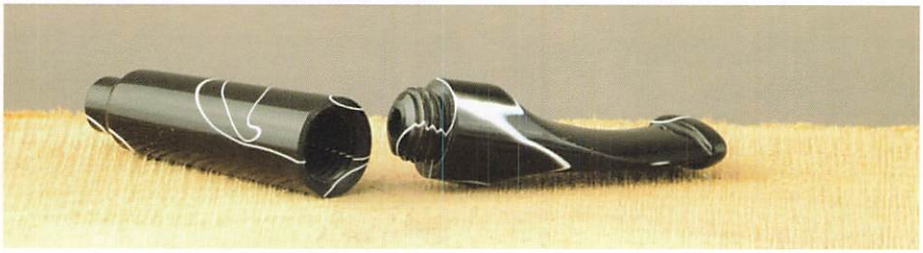
I sold some there, and some more at the Kansas City show six weeks later. That depleted my inventory and it was time to make more. I wasn't excited about it, as it is a tough pipe to make, but you make what you can sell.

Now for the homily. While it is not always clear at the beginning, it sometimes becomes clear that the path one starts on isn't always best. One finds that an idea gets obscured by the sordid details of real life. Fortunately, each day is an opportunity to start afresh. It was time to look again at the original idea born at the table in the Las Vegas casino in the light of what I had learned during the manufacturing process. I put my remaining example up on a shelf—out of sight. ▶



The pen stem

The idea realized



Did you ever discover that you make things too complicated? I do. It is not always as hard as it seems. That fever of a new idea, as entertaining as it is, can be made better by just a little time, a little experience, a little mental space. Stepping back. A chance to pack some tobacco into a pipe and light it. Take a fresh look at an idea or problem softened with a little bit of smoke. In the case of the BaccyPipe/Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch/Puzzle Pipe, this was the result of a fresh look.

Most of the modifications are a result of the turning loose of preconceptions—and the experiment of putting a cap on the tobacco chamber. The structure on the top of the shank has been simplified. The diameter of the opening into the shank was increased, and at the same time the overall diameter of the pipe as a whole was decreased. The bowl has the same thread at top and bottom, and can be flipped at will. The greater opening into the shank permitted the diameter of the stem to be increased. A more robust stem, and therefore more robust stem joint, meant the compression nut could be dispensed with. The cap protects the exposed male thread on the bottom of the bowl in the stowed configuration and can be used as a wind cap when deployed. The result is fewer, simpler parts, and it's as durable as all get out. The whole stem fits inside. All the threads are protected. It's a smaller pipe in the stored configuration. It smokes. Oh, and if you just have to pack it at home, there is always the option of the stem in the pen cap. P&T

See more of Anthony Harris' work at *www.acmepipes.com*.

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*UPS GROUND

BY STEPHEN A. ROSS

Swedish two-step

Half brothers Martin Vollmer and Anders Nilsson share passions for music and pipes

In the workshop of the pipemaking team of Martin Vollmer and Anders Nilsson, one is as likely to hear scratchy recordings of 1920s and 1930s American jazz, blues and country artists as they are to hear the scream of a band saw, whirl of a lathe or grinding of a disc sander. The half brothers (the men share the same father) are as passionate about old American music as they are about making pipes. Taking breaks from pipemaking to share some coffee and *dammsugare* (a type of Swedish cake with the popular name "vacuum cleaner" because it is shaped to resemble a canister vacuum cleaner) with frequent visitors, the two converse intelligently on topics such as the guitar talent of Robert Johnson and Louis Armstrong's influence on American jazz as well as the staining techniques of Tom Eltang, the daring sculptural ability of Hiroyuki Tokutomi or the merits of up-and-coming pipemakers around the world.

The workshop space is divided into two rooms in the basement of a large Georgian-style building that used to house the administrative offices and living quarters of the warden for a penitentiary in Malmö, Sweden, a city of nearly 300,000 residents located across the Øresund, a strait of water that separates the Danish capital, Copenhagen, from Sweden. It is just a 30-minute train ride from Copenhagen's international airport to Malmö, and the two cities are connected by the majestic Øresund Bridge, which opened in 2000.

While the building is no longer home to the prison's warden, it is still on prison grounds. High chain-link fences topped with concertina wire and guard towers are visible behind the building, which is now rented out as living quarters to prison employees and their families.

Vollmer and Nilsson's father, who passed away four years ago, and their mothers worked in the Swedish prison system. Vollmer's mother continues to live in one of the apartments.

The walls of part of the workshop, where Vollmer and Nilsson entertain guests and where meetings of the Swedish Pipe Club are held, is decorated with mementos of the half brothers' interests. Pictures of pipemakers and their works are interspersed among photos of musicians. Several guitars, which Nilsson plays,

are displayed in the shop. Sitting atop the table in the center of the room are several books about pipemakers, including Jan Andersson's excellent book *Scandinavian Pipemakers*, pouches and tins of various pipe tobaccos and a trophy for the Swedish slow-smoking champion.

"This is the most prestigious slow-smoking prize in Sweden because it is the only one," jokes Vollmer, the younger of the pipemaking duo. An inquisitive man, the 43-year-old Vollmer spent much of his early adulthood pursuing an academic career in religion before turning to pipemaking. Wearing round-rimmed wire glasses, a leather vest and light brown corduroy pants, Vollmer, who enjoys playing the accordion in a folk group that regularly meets in Malmö, resembles a teacher more than a pipemaker.

"In 2011, we went to Estoril, Portugal, and we came up with the idea of creating a prize because there is no Swedish championship," Nilsson, a former assistant in a sugar refinery laboratory, says. "In Europe it's very different. In Chicago the show is the thing, and then there is a small smoking competition. Here, the smoking competition is the important attraction and the show is second. The Swedish participant who places best in an international competition gets the trophy. We take it a little more seriously now that there is a trophy involved."

A large man with a big moustache that curls to a point on each end, Nilsson speaks in a slow, deliberate tone, carefully measuring each word before he utters it. In his late 40s, Nilsson picked up pipe smoking around 1980, when he was still in high school. Nilsson's preference for pipes influenced his younger half brother, who also started smoking pipes when he was in high school. Soon after, their father switched from smoking cigarillos to pipes.

Vollmer and Nilsson smoked and collected pipes together and became active in the Swedish pipe club by the late 1990s. They both were particularly interested in the classic shapes that most of the pipe shops in Malmö carried. Like many collectors, they spent a lot of time thinking about why they preferred certain pipes over others, which led them to make their first pipe in 2001.

Anders Nilsson and Martin Vollmer

"We both sort of grew up with a do-it-yourself attitude," Vollmer explains. "You spend a lot of time going over what makes a good pipe when you collect them. Then there is the impulse of trying to make one by yourself. It's very natural to us, thanks to our father. We could do it and maybe save a little bit of money, too."

They bought predrilled blocks from Pimo and carved pipes in their free time. They studied the pipes in their collections, looking at the fine details that made each one unique, and sought the characteristics that made some pipes smoke better than others. They ventured online to look at shapes they wanted to try to emulate.

"The classical influence is strong on us," Nilsson states. "More so than with other pipemakers, I think. In the beginning, that's what we started to make. They're the sort of pipes that we smoke ourselves, and we really enjoy smoking them. We spent hours poring over shape charts and websites about vintage English shapes, looking at them and trying to find out what made a shape particularly nice or why one doesn't look quite

to work without interruptions, music always playing in the background.

The men work on several pipes at the same time, spending one day cutting the blocks, another day shaping them and cutting the mouthpieces, and yet another day sanding and polishing them to perfection. While each can completely make a pipe on his own, there are certain steps where one brother displays a little more talent than the other.

"Working in batches helps us if we might have an order for some specific shapes," Nilsson says. "If there aren't any orders, we'll leaf through books and see pictures of pipes that we'd like to make. It's so much great fun to look at the old catalogs. Gary Schrier has published a thick catalog from BBB from the early part of the century. When you leaf through it, you see so many shapes that you think are modern but then realize that they were made 100 years ago. I start out by cutting a few blocks, and I usually drill the tobacco chamber and air holes before proceeding to shaping the pipe. With the classic shapes, you can do some of the shaping on the lathe, but usually Martin grabs them [from] me because he really enjoys doing the classic shapes."

Snatching a batch of blocks from his half brother, Vollmer completes the basic shaping on the disc sander starting with 40-grit sandpaper. After several rounds of sanding using progressively finer sandpapers, Vollmer switches off the disc sander and turns to a Dremel and chainsaw files to do the detailed shaping work. "I never go so tight into the finished shape on the wheel," Vollmer explains. "I'm used to using the Dremel and the pipe in my lap. I can get good light and it's easier to get sweeping lines. I couldn't get on without the Dremel and the chainsaw files. The very first time we saw another pipemaker work was Tom Eltang back in 2003. We went to buy some briar from him and show him a few of our pipes. We got to see him work on the shaping wheel. The speed and the precision he had was amazing. It was jaw-dropping to see how tightly he went into the shape on that wheel. Then, a year later, Tom told us that he had exactly the same reaction when he saw Tokutomi working on the sanding wheel. How remarkable that had to have been."

Nilsson almost always is cutting, drilling and shaping the mouthpieces from Ebonite rods, while Vollmer works on a pipe's shape. Typically he knows what sort of mouthpiece any shape will require, unless the pair is experimenting on a new pipe or if a piece is going to be sandblasted, a task that Vollmer performs.

The pair very rarely rusticates a pipe, and they estimate they sandblast a little more than half their annual production. On his first trip to the Chicago pipe show, Vollmer had one particular wish he hoped would come true—to meet the American sandblasting master Jim Cooke. At dinner one night, his wish was fulfilled.

"That was a thrill," Vollmer enthuses. "His pipes are incredibly special. There is a distinct style to American sandblasting that can be attributed directly to Jim. There are three kinds of sandblast. There is the Danish sandblast that is fairly shallow. The old Dunhill sandblast is very craggy and sometimes breaks the shape of the pipe model. And then there is the American sandblast, where the shape of the pipe retains its integrity and the sandblast is not quite as sculpted following the ring

grain. We aim for the middle ground between the Dunhill and the American styles."

While a flaw in the wood might affect the pipe's finish, it can also influence what type of mouthpiece is attached. "Sandblasting can change what you want to do with the mouthpiece," Nilsson explains. "We almost never use Cumberland for anything other than black sandblasts. We think that a black sandblast with a simple ring and then a Cumberland mouthpiece looks great."

Very early in their pipemaking careers, Vollmer and Nilsson accepted the challenge of making their own mouthpieces. Using mostly Ebonite, Nilsson also uses Cumberland and a synthetic amber material. For special orders, he has made mouthpieces out of acrylic. With the guidance of Per Billhall, they divined the secrets of a good smoking pipe and have incorporated them into their own work.

"I can say with certainty that we have never sold a pipe with a production mouthpiece," Nilsson proudly explains. "The stem work is very important. All the little details make it nice. If people are willing to pay a lot of money for our pipes, I feel that we owe it to them to give our best effort. We don't claim to make perfect pipes, but they damn better be the best that we can make.

"How the mouthpiece influences the air flow makes a nice smoking pipe. What the mouthpiece looks like on the inside makes the customers [come] back. You can make a nice-looking pipe, but it's the airflow in the mouthpiece that's important."

Nilsson drills the air hole to a diameter of 4 mm. Using a file made from part of a hacksaw blade, he smoothes the air hole's walls and opens it an inch from the mouthpiece's tip. His technique allows even the fluffiest pipe cleaners available on the market to pass through the air hole unobstructed. He also cuts the tenon so there is a small amount of space between it and the mortise.

"Jim Cooke is particularly exact about that," he states. "He says three-thousandths of an inch between the mortise and tenon is perfect. But then he recommends his buyers to never take the mouthpiece out. We don't leave such a small space, but we're always careful to never leave too much between the two. I have a hard time figuring out why so many factory pipes have been so poorly engineered. Always when I buy one I find that I have to do a little bit of work in the mouthpiece so that I can smoke it. The only pipes where that [hasn't] been the case are the old Dunhills I have bought. In some little ways they deserve their reputation."

When Vollmer and Nilsson choose to adorn one of their pipes, they use bamboo, silver, boxwood or other decorative woods such as box elder wood they get from a supplier who typically sells his material to knife makers. When a pipe is finished, they photograph it and Vollmer applies a simple stamp—"Vollmer & Nilsson"—to the shank.

"We are continuing to grow as pipemakers," Vollmer comments. "Our silverwork and using bamboo present different sets of challenges. You have to keep getting better; otherwise you're doing something wrong."

Nodding his head in agreement, Nilsson adds, "I think that's true for all real crafts. You can never think you have learned all there is to know. There is always something new to

learn. For us, every pipe and every piece of briar presents a new challenge. That's the beauty of it."

With their father's summer homes cleaned out, both men say they hope to increase their production to between 150 and 200 pipes annually and continue to hone their skills. They also are encouraging pipe smokers to contact them with their ideas for custom-made pipes, which Vollmer and Nilsson particularly enjoy making.

"That's one of the big thrills of pipemaking," Vollmer says. "We enjoy the back-and-forth nature of working with someone to make their idea for a pipe work. It's fun to collaborate on a project like that, and we love to hear when a person is pleased with his pipe."

Other than custom pipes and a few freehand shapes, they will continue to concentrate on their first love—classic pipes. They recognize they might be overlooked at pipe shows, where exotic freehands typically gain the attention, but they are strong advocates of classic shapes.

"If we can in some way make those shapes more popular, we will be very happy," Nilsson explains. "It's very nice to have blowfishes, Ramses, ballerinas and such. They are smokable arts. We're into making pipes. Making a pipe that smokes well is our first goal. There is something very appealing about functional art—letting function dictate the shape. Look at the violin; it's a beautiful piece of wood, but it has a particular shape because that's what produces the best sound. Classical pipe shapes haven't become classical by accident. There's a reason for their development."

A particular goal they are constantly striving to achieve is to craft a perfect billiard—whatever that is.

"It's hard to describe, but you know it when you see it," Vollmer explains. "It is a pipe that every pipe smoker has an idea of what a billiard should look like. There are very small deviations from that which make it look plainly wrong. I hope that my tombstone will say something like, 'He was reasonably nice and made good billiards.' The billiard is such a simple shape, but it really isn't. It is actually complex to make really nice."

While their quest to make the perfect billiard continues, Vollmer and Nilsson profess that their enjoyment in pipemaking is fulfilled just by knowing their work is improving the enjoyment of other people's lives, as if drinking coffee, smoking pipes, chatting with friends, making pipes and listening to music isn't reward enough.

"It's a kick to see joy cross people's faces when they smoke our pipes," Vollmer explains. "Reading people on smokers' forums describing a happy, quiet moment smoking one of our pipes makes me happy. Somewhere, someone is sitting with one of our pipes and having a good time. It's one of the good things in life."

"That was one of the things that we weren't quite aware of," Nilsson adds. "That's a big thing—that in some little way we're making life for our customers a little better. That's a great feeling.

"It's also great fun to be able to do this with my brother. It's all about the wonderful people. We weren't quite aware of that when we started out, but it's becoming more apparent as we continue in the pipe world. It's nice to produce something with your hands. There is something that will be left after us. And being your own boss is quite nice. This is not a smoke-free workplace." P&T

Craig Tarler

A great friend to pipe smokers everywhere, Craig Cornell Tarler, 82, of Cornell & Diehl, passed away Sept. 4. His booming laugh, endless enthusiasm, dreadful jokes, innovation, childlike wonder and loyal support of the pipe-smoking community will be terribly missed.

Tarler and his wife, Patty, entered our hobby later in life than most. Instead of retiring in 1990, they bought a rundown tobacco company—"Just to keep things interesting," Tarler said. He'd had a long, enormously successful career in public relations, but now it was time to relax. Part of that relaxation plan was to give up cigarettes and smoke only pipes. An on-again/off-again pipe smoker for most of his life, Tarler called the company he'd usually ordered tobacco from, and while on the phone, he learned the company was for sale. That information would have a profound effect on his life, and on the lives of all of us.

The company was called Amar Blending, which had previously acquired the old Atlas Blending company. The Tarlers decided to buy it to help occupy their time. "I thought it might be fun," said Tarler.

When most of us think about tobacco companies, we tend to think bigger than Amar Blending. Tarler drove a van to pick it up, but half a van would have been enough. There was some tobacco, some flavorings and a box of recipes. He got a few dozen wholesale accounts and some customer cards. He renamed the company Cornell & Diehl, using his middle name and Patty's maiden name. They moved from Pennsylvania to Morganton, N.C., to be near family and took their new tobacco company with them.

Here's an important detail about Craig Tarler: He always carried more ideas and more enthusiasm than typically fits into one human mind. He may at first have thought he'd just be dabbling in tobacco blending to fill some idle hours of retirement, but his enthusiasm would never have let that suffice. His expertise in public relations took hold, and Cornell & Diehl started to thrive.

In 1995 he started a website and business expanded further. He constantly developed new blends. He loved humorous names for the tobaccos and arranging humorous artwork for the tins. He and Patty became consistent exhibitors at pipe shows, and their irresistible personalities won them friends around the world. In 1999 he started tinning tobaccos for G.L. Pease, with whom he later collaborated on the Two Friends line of tobaccos.

In 2005, C&D moved to larger manufacturing facilities to accommodate more blends, more staff, more accounts, more shipping—more everything.

Long before he left us, Tarler ensured that Cornell & Diehl would seamlessly and efficiently continue providing for the pipe community even when he stepped away from the business. Four years ago, his son, Chris, joined C&D. With decades of business experience in the restaurant industry, Chris has been operating the company with his father for years, and Craig's departure, while devastating to his family and all who knew him, will not affect the quality or service for which C&D is known. Also comforting, one of the most wonderful women ever to grace our community, Patty Tarler, is still there.

Craig Tarler's defining characteristic throughout his adventures in tobacco was to always have fun. And the fun he couldn't help having was infectious. Everyone who spoke to Tarler came away feeling better about the world. As a tobacco man, Tarler built a company and brought us many wondrous and delicious tobacco experiences, but the relationships he built within our small community were more wonderful yet. We'll continue to hear his booming laugh at our pipe shows, and remember the friend we were privileged to have known. P&T

BY R.D. FIELD

Colorado treasure

Englewood's Edward's Pipe and Tobacco Shop is part tobacco shop, part museum

There's a shop just outside of Denver, in Englewood, Colo. I know it well because I've been doing trunk shows there once or twice a year for about 11 years. The shop is always nice, if a bit cramped—a true tobacconist's shop. Pipes, cigars, tons of tinned pipe tobaccos, smokers' accessories—that's it. No statues, glasses, dolls or other stuff some shops install to attract (I guess) a different type of clientele. No, this is a shop catering to the pipe and cigar smoker, and it doesn't try to be anything else.

The owner, Bryan Reid, knows an awful lot about two things (well, I'm sure he knows a lot about more than two things, but these two are pertinent here)—the history of the western United States and antiques. Reid, on his off days, which aren't many as he likes to work at the shop, travels to many historic towns such as Leadville, Durango, Trinidad, Glenwood Springs (where Doc Holliday breathed his last) and Greeley—anyway, you get the idea.

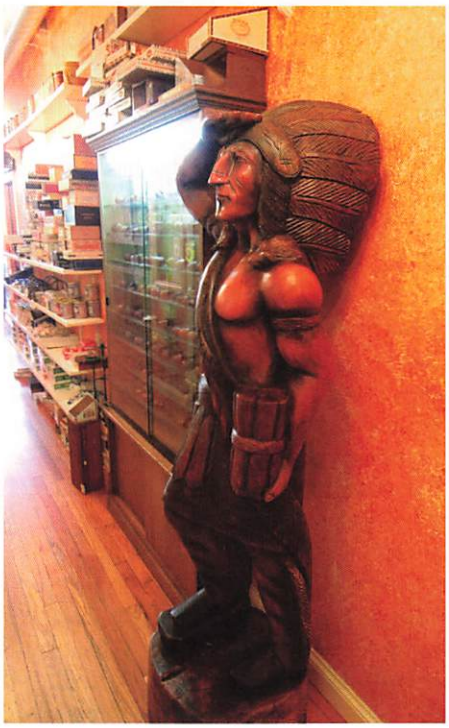
The West is different from other parts of the country—friendlier, especially in smaller towns and villages. Reid would stop in these places and hunt up things having to do with smoking, such as wall signs, hanging glassed-in pipe racks, smoking stands, smokers' rocking chairs and more—much more. Some of the old mining towns he went into used to have populations of as many as 10,000 to 15,000 folks but are now down to fewer than 100. Once the mines played out, so did the towns. But the buildings are still there, some occupied, others not. And some of the old furniture and wall decorations are still there as well. Like as not, Reid would find a couple of things on these trips and they would go into Edward's Pipe and Tobacco Shop, making it more crowded than ever.

Luckily, Reid owns the building as well as the one next door. A couple of years ago he decided to expand and so tore out the wall separating the ground floor between the two buildings. Edward's Pipe and Tobacco Shop now has twice the space. Extensive renovations provide even more space for display, and so even more smokers' antiques have found their way into the shop.

I've been to a few museums in the U.S. and western Europe. Some are large, extensive; others small and intimate. Edward's Pipe and Tobacco Shop is, in my opinion, a smokers' museum. Even better, you don't have to lay out any cash to visit. And even more better, you can buy stuff there.

The range of goods is rather extensive: handmade pipes by well-known artisan pipemakers, to midline grades, to basket pipes; meerschaums large and small; and Edward's Pipe and Tobacco Shop's own line of briars. Cigars rate too, with all the top-rated brands in stock and ready to go. And then there is so much pipe tobacco—tins galore.

There are a lot of artisans in the western U.S. I guess much of this has to do with the fact that folks who settled in this part of the country in the last 150 years had to do for



themselves—make their own clothes, implements, housing, barns and fences. This seems to have carried through to today. As you pass through these old towns, there are lots of handcrafted goods for sale, such as furniture, tools and clothing (and much of it is from reclaimed materials; nothing seems to go to waste here). Well, Edward's has such an artisan maker on call—a cabinetmaker, Lee, who has made some fantastic pipe racks for customers.

Then there are the other fine folks who work behind the counter. There's Tom, a very sweet man who hides behind a sardonic grin and is the master of pipes. Amy knows more about cigars than many (and maybe most) cigar company representatives. A most helpful man, Dave, is a jack of all trades.

As I've done about 18 shows at Edward's, I've watched how this four-person crew works and how they individually really cater to their clientele. These folks and a smokers' museum; how can any customer be less than thrilled? P&T

BY WILLIAM SERAD

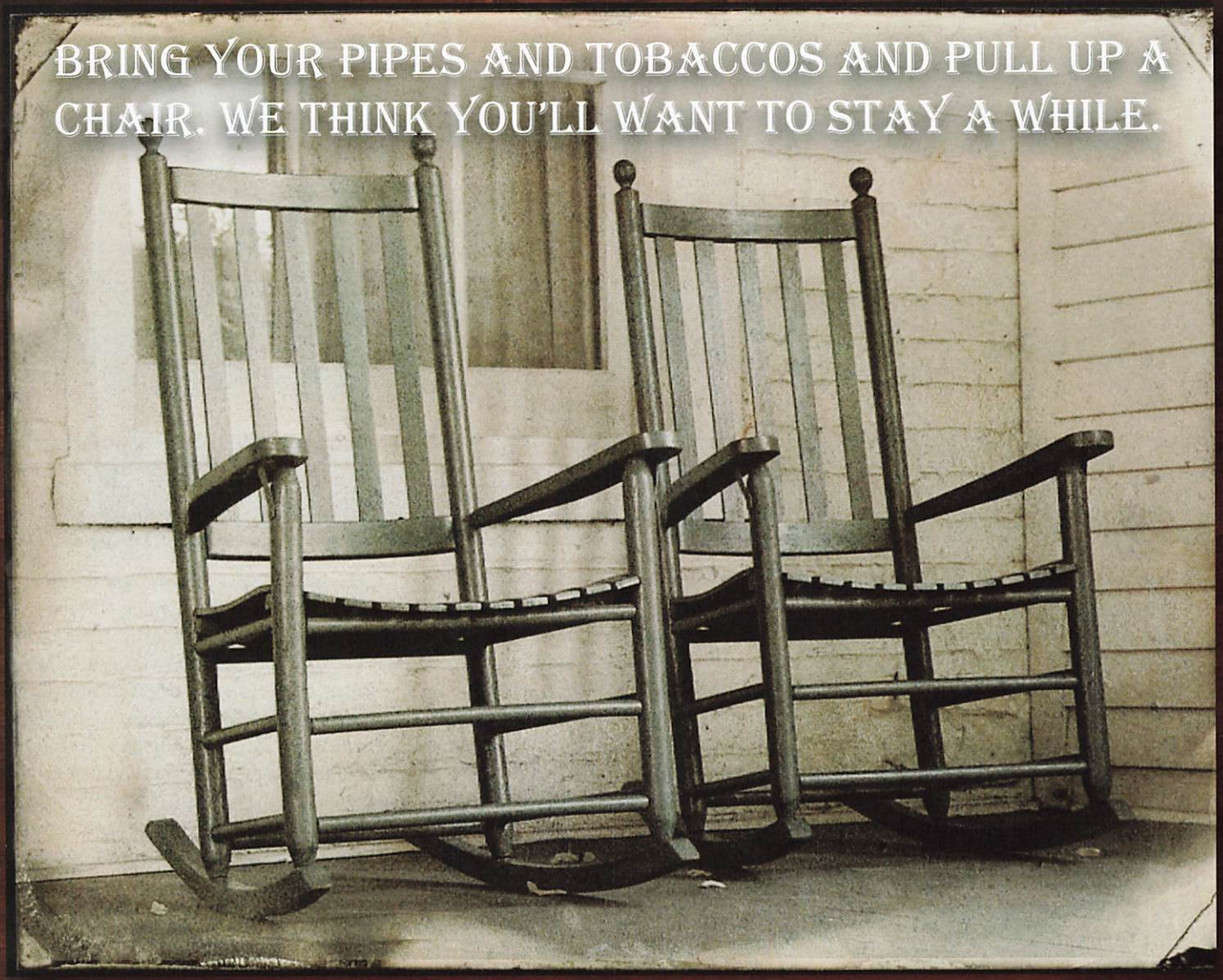
After I received a letter from Mr. Owen KenKnight of Northfield, Minn., touching on several subjects related to his preference for Burley, I decided to check my sometimes faulty memory. In the previous column, I recalled and mentioned Rattray's blends now containing Burley. From information on the Kohlhase & Kopp website (*www.kohlhase-tobacco.com/site/index.php?id=158*), the current manufacturers of Rattray's, I was not quite accurate. Brown Clunee and Old Gowrie are both said to contain Kentucky, which could be Burley, or it could be dark leaf. Hal O' the Wynd contains fire-cured Kentucky, which would definitely be fire-cured dark leaf, not Burley, prepared as I described previously. Navigating the site requires some German, unless I missed the English portal, and my German is not much good beyond musical markings and German opera lyrics ("He da! He da! He do!" is the same in English and German), but the descriptions are clear enough if you navigate Kohlhase's site. Old Gowrie, is, for instance, "Fine, dark Virginia, Kentucky and a touch of Perique matured in the press for up to three months, then cut and rubbed out by hand." Mr. KenKnight mentions, in the context of Burley versus Virginias, sweeteners. The subject deserves a longer treatment, so in a future column I will discuss sweetening and flavor enhancers.

In this issue, however, I would like to discuss collecting. I collect pipes as well as tobacco and fine writing instruments (also known as pens). When does one have enough? In the realm of money, someone once asked J. Paul Getty how much money it took to be rich, and he replied, "More." This is amusing, but pathological. To my wife, I have far too many pipes, and my daughters assert that opening any drawer in my library will produce pipes (in addition to the ones on display). This is not true. There is a drawer of paper and a drawer of fine writing instruments. To the noted author and publisher Gary B. Schrier (*www.seattlepipeclub.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=969877&module_id=17054*) in an article called, appropriately, "Pipe Collecting": "We all collect pipes: If we have one pipe (surely unthinkable!) we're a smoker, two pipes a 'collecting' pipe smoker. I collect calabash pipes. They say every collection should have one; and I know that many of my friends and acquaintances that are of the pipe are of the calabash as well. So why collect this rather arcane and beast of a pipe? ... Its uniqueness, its obscurity, its amalgamation of so many different classic pipe materials, but most of all, it is the fineness of the smoke." Mr. Schrier collects for a purpose. The main one is quality, always a laudable objective. In the interest of full disclosure, I have and have gifted calabash pipes.

I, at some point too late, came across a notice from the great British auction house Christie's for an auction of The Trevor Barton Collection of Unusual Smoking Pipes (*www.christies.com/features/2010-august-pipe-dreams-899-1.aspx*). Here was a man dedicated to pipe collecting. He was a member of *Academie Internationale de la Pipe* and became known to the locals of Portobello and Bermondsey market as "The Pipe Man." "Trevor Barton owned what was arguably the finest, most wide-ranging collection of pipes and smoking memorabilia in the world." He amassed quite a "fantastic collection, reflecting over 50 years of passionate pipe collecting. Spending much of his life working abroad, Trevor Barton's pipes come from all over the world." We should all have such passion to enrich our lives, for pipes or otherwise.

I am of the opinion that it takes three of something to say one has knowledge of it. In Spanish, there are two verbs for knowing: *saber* and *conocer*. The first has Latin roots, and is more related to intellectual knowledge, facts and the like. The second has Greek roots (gnosis) and is related to personal knowledge, as you know someone or know a museum at a different level. I know about all the major pipe carvers, but I do not know them and their work intimately. A gnosis is needed of their work, even if we never meet, and I know their hearts and minds and hands. I need to read three books by an author to know his or her writing. I need to try a restaurant at least three times to know it and have an informed opinion. I went skiing three times to be certain that I hate it. Similarly, I need three pipes from a maker to know his work. I say maker rather than carver, because I have nine Kirstens of various styles, sizes and bowl sizes, and seven Falcons in various incarnations, and both are more machined than carved (in the sense of a traditional briar or meerschaum). I have 11 James Upshalls, not only to know the good Colonel Barnes, but because I like them. I have quite a few Ben Wades. I have five Ferndowns because my rule of three wasn't enough, and an uncounted number of Petersons. As of yet, I have only two very nice Boswells and just one rather wonderful Trevor Talbert (a Ligne Bretagne, his low end no less)—neither number quite enough.

This system of knowledge has not at all times worked well for me. A case in point started more than 30 years ago. I bought a Jobey Stromboli at the now-gone Philadelphia Tobacconist Shop on Chestnut Street. It was a Canadian, and like the whole line, black and roughly carved with large, craggy chips taken out. The most obvious feature of all Stromboli were the acrylic bits, all brightly colored, and made (I was informed) from the same material as bowling balls. On the Canadian I first purchased, it was pearlized yellow, and I do not like yellow. Cheery bits seem inappropriate to me. One could not, for instance, smoke it wearing a homburg. What weird whimsy made me buy it? I discovered it was both fairly priced and a superlative smoker. I was so impressed, I bought one for a friend for his birthday. I thought I had found the holy grail of mass-market pipes, which happened to be a bit unusual in finish and lurid in color. I bought another, and it was not so fine as the first, and then my friend bought me one for my birthday, and I bought another, then another. I have since bought others as estate pipes, in a variety of colors. The pipes pictured show collecting and gift-giving run amok. And, worst of all, perhaps 20 percent of them are excellent smokers; only one more was superlative. My other Stromboli pipes are at least good, however. This was not the most fruitful use



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of time, though the financial repercussions were not extreme.

Another instance of collecting gone a bit haywire was initiated at the Chicago pipe show some years ago. I purchased a beautiful Ming Kahuna tamper, this time in a marbled blue. Is there a theme here with brightly colored objects? That is a collecting habit of crows and magpies, I believe. However, as I was completing the financial end of the transaction, it was mentioned that the tamper was turned from rod stock also used by the Sheaffer Pen Co. for some of its high-end products. I would have been better off with my fingers in my ears, saying, "LA LA LA LA LA, I CAN'T HEAR YOU" at this point. However, the damage was done, and being a collector of pens, the connection between my hobbies was too compelling to pass up. I then started on my quest of finding a matching pen. I searched pen stores and the Internet. Unfortunately, they were no longer being manufactured. Finally, I found a ballpoint NOS (new old stock) via eBay, and now have probably the only Sheaffer pen/Ming Kahuna tamper matched set in the world. Then again, there is probably someone in the world with a green set. I know there is a matching fountain pen to my set, but I do not feel the burning need to acquire it as I did the ballpoint.

I should note at this point that Randy O. Frost, a professor of psychology at Smith College and the author of *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*, wrote (*www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/12/29/why-we-collect-stuff/when-collecting-becomes-hoarding*): "A passion for collecting is a healthy outlet and an activity that keeps people connected to the world around them. But it can become a deadly enterprise when it crosses the line into hoarding." So when is it a problem? According to Geralin Thomas (*http://metropolitanorganizing.com/managing-modern-life/hoarding-services/the-three-hallmarks-of-chronic-disorganization-hoarding-and-collecting/*), who works with the chronically disorganized, collecting involves valuing, organizing and displaying, and those who do find joy and contentment in the company of their treasures. Indeed I do; in addition, I use them and treasure them even more when they work well, similarly to Mr. Schrier. For example, I have at least nine corncobs (a subject for the next column), which do not best represent the pinnacle of artisan-grade effort. But when broken in well, cobs deliver a fine smoke.

It becomes a problem when it moves from collecting to compulsive hoarding, which is defined in the fount of all knowledge, Wikipedia (where did we seek knowledge after the Oracle at Delphi and before Wikipedia? Humanity must have been lost without knowing it) (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compulsive_hoarding*):

"Compulsive hoarding (or pathological collecting) is a pattern of behavior that is characterized by the excessive acquisition of and inability or unwillingness to discard large quantities of objects that would seemingly qualify as useless or without value."

Clearly, this cannot refer to pipe collecting, because pipes inherently cannot qualify as useless or without value. They have profound utility in addition to their aesthetic value of design and material. Where else can one find such a perfect marriage of form and function, of art and usefulness, of style and cunning handcraft? It is interesting that the all-knowing Wiki mentions therapeutic interventions, like developing decisionmaking skills. These are developed in selecting fine tobacco. Another intervention is gaining and performing relaxation skills, but that is the same thing as buying and using a pipe. It also suggests group therapy, and I believe they are referring to a pipe club. In essence, the best therapeutic intervention would seem to be to buy another pipe.

So, my only conclusion is similar to Mr. Getty's, but not with regard to an avaricious vocation. It pertains to the gentle hobby of kapnismology. I agree with Mr. Schrier that you are a perhaps unintentional and unknowing "collecting smoker" if you have two pipes, and I continue to think three or more shows purpose to know the maker personally through his art. But how many pipes does it take to be a true collector? More. The compulsive pipe hoarder is in the same existential category as the yeti and Big Foot. P&T

How many pipes do you have? How many should you have? Write! A letter c/o *P&T* or *wserad@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com*. Next issue: To cob or not to cob and, of course, whithersoever the readership listeth.

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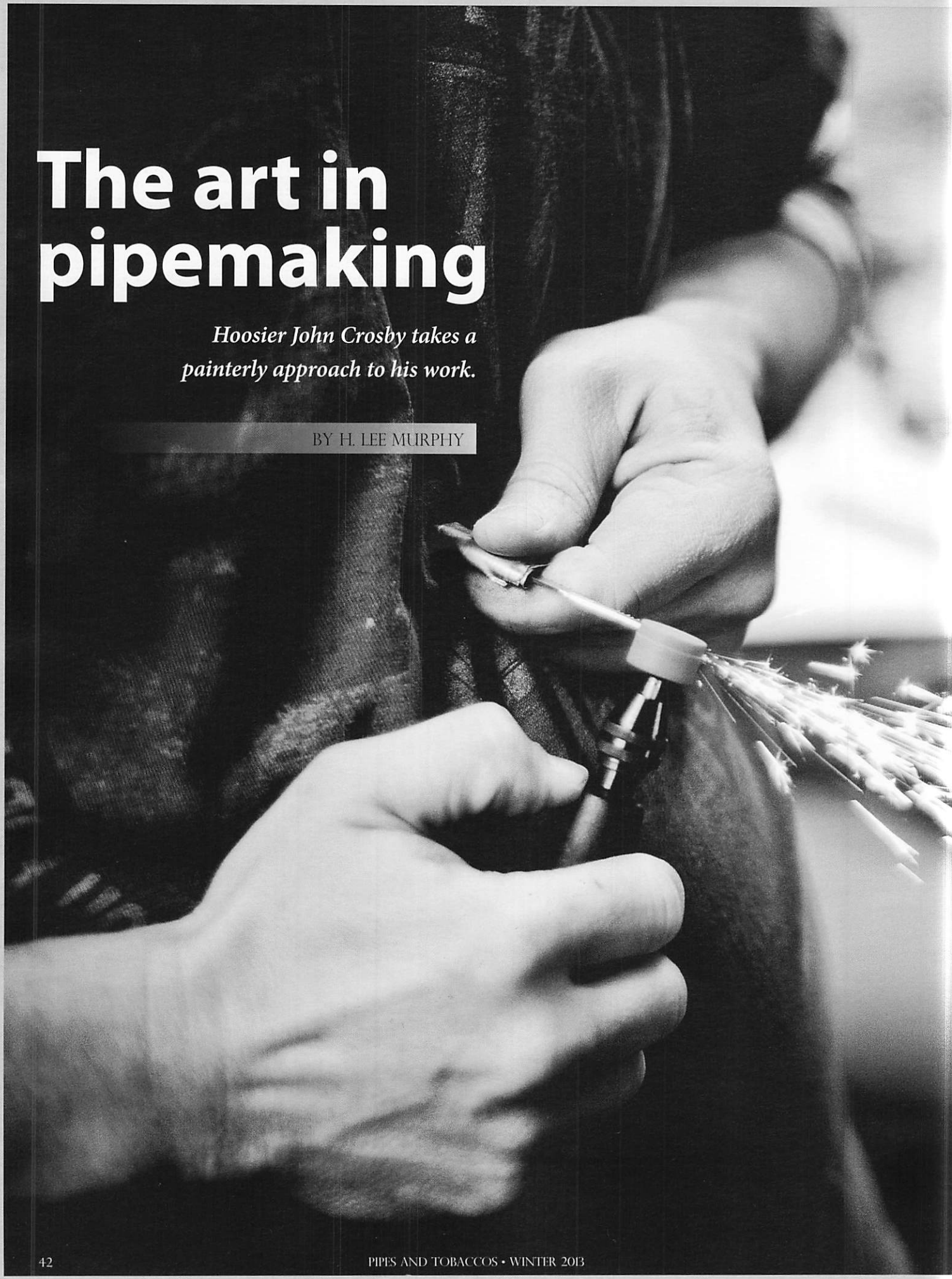


The art in pipemaking

Hoosier John Crosby takes a painterly approach to his work.

BY H. LEE MURPHY

In the world of pipemaking, it's an age-old question. Is the act of carving briar better suited to wood-turners and other craftsmen who are practiced with lathes and drill presses? Or is it the lyrical artist, who can fashion on command pages of original and unique drawings hatched from some mysterious creative impulse, who has the advantage, even if he's all thumbs in turning a bowl on a machine?

John Crosby, a pipemaker for the past eight years based in Lafayette, Ind., springs from the artist side of the equation. He's a painter of oils and a printmaker who has had his work exhibited in galleries around the Midwest; his employer, Purdue University, where he works his day job as a counselor and instructor, keeps some of his work in its permanent collection of art.

He embarked on pipemaking never having used a lathe before, Crosby admits now. Yet he never felt at a disadvantage versus the woodworking wizards who dominate much of the industry. "Every pipe has to be well-crafted, of course," Crosby says in a conversation on a warm summer day in the garage attached to his home, where he keeps a modest workshop. "But it's the art that separates the well-made yet pedestrian pipe from something that is really special."

The 40-year-old Crosby has his heroes and influences—he admires the work of luminaries such as Svend Bang, Rainer Barbi, Wolfgang Becker and Cornelius Manz—but he keeps a workspace that is notably void of any photos or samples of anybody else's work. They'd just get in the way of his campaign to fashion his own style. "I've been conscious of wanting to make pipes that didn't look like pipes made by anybody else," he stresses. ▶

Crosby grinds a jigsaw blade for opening the slot in a mouthpiece. (*Photo by William L. Snyder*)

All pipe photos by John Crosby

And, in fact, his style has become recognizable. Crosby, who maintains a website at *www.crosbypipes.com* while selling at select public shows, has become best known as a maker of chubby pipes in such shapes as apples and squashed tomatoes. Many of his creations don't stretch much past 5 to 5.5 inches in length, a size once frowned upon in a magnum-mad era. But with more and more hobbyists lately forced to catch short smokes where they can amid an ocean of no-smoking laws, the compact Crosby silhouette is catching on again. The sort of nose-warmers that Crosby likes are back in style, though he doesn't study such shifting trends very seriously. Crosby fearlessly ignores current fashions while building pipes that he himself likes to smoke.

The bias in favor of chubby styles is one reason Crosby has never even attempted to make a pipe in his namesake shape. The long and sleek Crosby pipes favored back in the 1950s and '60s by the entertainer Bing Crosby, typically supplied by the English maker Merchant Service, are just not John Crosby's cup of tea. Too bad: Not many pipemakers share a name with a pipe shape. Any Bobby Billiards or Butch Bulldogs out there?

The Crosby career came along by accident, a serendipitous encounter with a student providing the initial spark. Adam Davidson, today a pipemaker and employee at Smokingpipes.com in South Carolina, grew up near Lafayette and was an industrial design major at Purdue a decade ago when he happened to pick up a Federal Express shipment of pipe tobacco on his way to a meeting with his campus adviser, Crosby, to plan his course selections for a new semester. Crosby was a cigar smoker at the time, with a dozen sticks displayed on the desk in his office. Davidson was a pipe lover always on the hunt for new converts.

"I walked into his office with my tobacco, and that started a whole conversation with John about pipes versus cigars. I told him that he could get more enjoyment out of pipes," Davidson, now 31, remembers today. "He was intrigued, and before I knew it he took my advice."

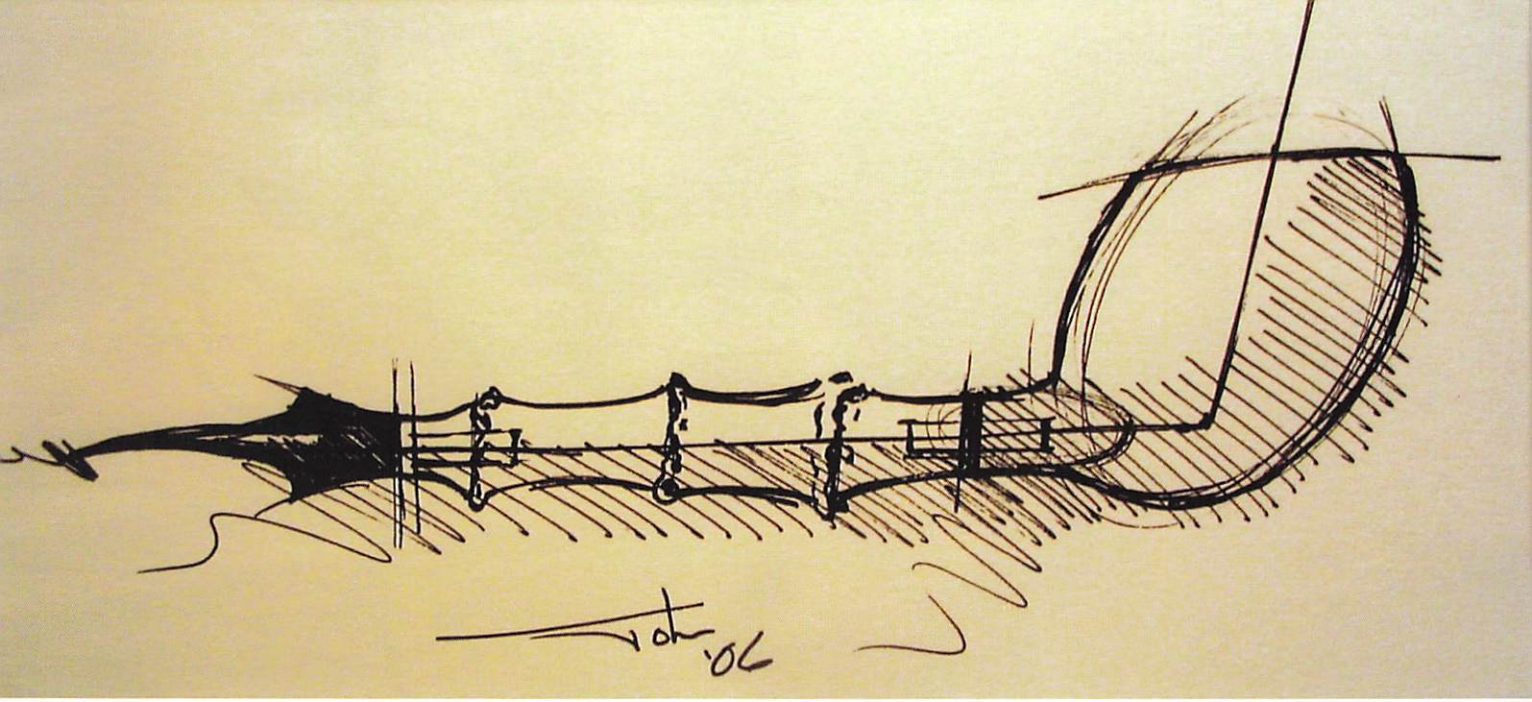
Crosby ventured down to a local tobacco shop at the time and bought a Savinelli Apple at the bargain price of $20, then began to troll the Internet in search of directions on how to become proficient at lighting and tamping. It was then that he came across the Pipemakers Forum site, which mentioned the upcoming Chicagoland International Pipe and Tobacciana Show, just a two-hour drive away. He attended his first show in 2003 and was enthralled with the work of attendees such as Michael Parks and Peter Heeschen.

"I hadn't seen so many high-grade artisan pipes before," Crosby remembers. "I kept thinking, this is how a pipe should look. For some reason I was taken to the challenge of drawing my own pipe design after a discussion with Michael Parks about the connection between art and pipemaking."

In short order, Crosby ordered a dozen pre-drilled pipe kits, with molded stems inserted in each block, and sought out the counsel of such experts as Tyler Beard of the Pipemakers Forum. Soon Davidson, both before and after his graduation from Purdue in 2003, joined in. The two began spending their Saturdays together camped in the Crosby garage, working as novices on blocks of Italian briar.

He tried carving by hand at first, but Crosby soon had a Jet wood lathe installed and, as he gained confidence, in 2005 began making his own stems. "In my shop I learned to shape first, then I later focused on drilling and engineering and finishing and, finally, making stems," Crosby recalls. "I was learning on my own, though the Pipemakers Forum was critical for me. It's there that pipemakers can all get together and talk to each other."

He took his first table at the Chicago show in 2006 and sold four of the six pipes he displayed, the most expensive priced at $250. Fellow pipemakers were encouraging. A couple of collectors subsequently showed interest by buying up multiple pieces.



Crosby's career has made impressive progress since, though many of his efforts have come in fits and starts. Between 2007 and 2010, Crosby made 50 pipes or more each year. His volume tailed off to just 20 in 2011, and he was on track this year to make no more than that. Throughout, his pricing hasn't changed much, with most rusticated shapes selling for $200 to $300, blasts at $300 to $400 and smooths at $400 to $500.

Why the reduced production? Crosby has grown restless in the past couple of years, in search of a fresh breakthrough style that he can call all his own. He says he's merely reached his pipemaking adolescence, but can't quite see clearly the adulthood that lies ahead. "This is common for artists," he explains. "I'm recharging my batteries while I look for ways to accomplish new things that haven't been tried before."

In fact, Crosby's work habits are so unpredictable it's been a blessing he hasn't given up his day job at Purdue in search of a full-time career in pipes. He works a full 40 hours a week at the university, then spends much of his spare time with his wife and two young daughters, both rooting for and coaching them through soccer, softball and swimming lessons. They in turn have indulged him in his private time spent in the workshop—usually toiling away from 8 p.m. to midnight on most weeknights and four hours on either a Saturday or Sunday morning. ▶

Photo by William L. Snyder

A typical Crosby pipe requires 10 to 20 hours of toil, but the actual carving is sometimes spread over weeks of time. "I work in small bursts, with three or four hours at a time about my limit," he says. "I'll work on a pipe for an hour or two, hit a sticking point and go off and drink some coffee and read, and then come back and work on another pipe. That's my way of keeping my mind fresh."

He's convinced there is an inevitable ebb and flow in any pipe's evolution. "You start off thinking a pipe's going to be great. Then, as the work progresses, it's only going to be good. And then you get so frustrated you wonder why you're bothering to stick with it at all. Then you keep working and the pipe begins to look good and even great to you again," Crosby, who usually has four or five pipes going at a time in various stages of production, says. "As a pipemaker, it's possible to get too close to something. Take a break away and come back and you say, 'Of course, that's the solution—the shank needs to be wider at some point.' And then it's all fixed."

As a trained artist, Crosby is drawing pipe shapes all the time, brainstorming ideas. But a final product typically ends up not a facsimile of any single idea but usually an amalgam of several concepts. That's just fine with Crosby, who has learned to make adjustments on the fly as he works. Up until 2008, he always drilled his blocks of briar first, then shaped around the holes. But in recent years he has shaped first and drilled later on.

Says Crosby: "For total artistic freedom, you need to drill later on. I've learned that you may get into carving and decide you want to give extra curve to the bottom of your bowl, but you can't do that because you'll get too close to a hole you've already drilled. I don't like to set limits on myself like that."

His workshop is not littered with a lot of fancy machinery. A typical Crosby pipe is first shaped on an angle grinder with sand discs, then a French wheel with finer sandpaper, working in progression from 36 grit to 220 grit on the French wheel. Somewhere during this time the hole is drilled and plenty of hand sanding follows. Chisels are rarely employed. At some point Crosby makes a decision between smooth or blast, with the latter performed in a blasting cabinet in an industrial design studio on the nearby Purdue campus.

Crosby is a harsh judge at this point in the creative process. "I don't like distracting sand pits at all in my smooths," he says. "The decision on smooth versus blast is based almost entirely on the quality of the grain. If I have a choice between finishing with an OK smooth or a stellar blast, I'll go for the blast."

He has firm ideas on decorations attached to pipes. He has put silver rings on a few of his pieces. He's also used inlays made of boxwood and marblewood and black palm wood. But he employs such embellishments with restraint. "Put on too much accent and it's like a joke with more than one punch line," Crosby says. "It gets chaotic and confusing. I am a less-is-more kind of guy, favoring subtle design characteristics."

At the same time, he's not afraid to push boundaries. Years ago Crosby was stung when a critic suggested his paintings were very good, but "too safe." Crosby realized the criticism was valid. He then took a finished print and sliced it into four strips and patched them back together in a modernist collage. The result was thrilling. Friends and colleagues congratulated him on his unconventional turn. He now hopes to accomplish a flourish just as distinctive in his pipemaking.

First, however, Crosby ought to improve his marketing skills. He gets

roughly 60 percent of his sales off his website and another 40 percent from shows he attends such as Chicago, Richmond and Columbus.

His lone retail outlet currently is Nick Miller's Quality Briar website based in Worcester, Mass. Miller started as a Crosby customer, then later added him to his stable of pipemakers that now exceeds 50 names. "What's struck me about John from the start are both his shaping and prices," says Miller, who acquired a seven-day set from Crosby years ago that he later sold. "His shaping aesthetic isn't exactly Danish, and it's not really German either. It's something that is all his. As for his prices, an artisan pipe for less than $500 is a nice range to be in."

Miller recently sold a squattish Dublin blast of Crosby's on his website for $350 and had a Rhodesian smooth with a slightly bent stem advertised for $475. "On a scale of one to 10 as a pipemaker, I put John at around 7.5 or 8. He's really solid," Miller says. "I only wish that I could get more pipes from him. There is enough demand for them that I could sell more if I had them."

Crosby is in no hurry at the moment, however. He is a smoker lacking in pretension—owning just a half-dozen pipes himself, including an Adam Davidson rusticated pot and a Tyler Beard cutty. His favored tobacco is typically Virginia blends sourced from McClelland Tobacco Co. He smokes just three or four bowls a week, often in his workshop while waiting for stain to dry. He works in the garage through the Indiana winters, with a single kerosene space heater for warmth.

Davidson still catches up with Crosby when he visits family in the area. Years ago, he recalls, "I was scared to stand next to John when he was working at the lathe. I was not sure he knew what he was doing," Davidson says. Since then he's gained an appreciation for the lean Crosby style, which often features slightly curved stems that Davidson calls "underbent, though comfortable in the mouth." Davidson hangs a couple of Crosby's paintings at home, too.

"John's art is really cool," Davidson concludes. To growing numbers of fans, his pipes are cool, too. P&T

Photo by William L. Snyder

Photo by William L. Snyder

BY RICK NEWCOMBE

It all began with Peterson

Peterson sparks a collector's passion for pipes

For more than three decades, I have closely examined, bought, traded and sold thousands of pipes, read hundreds of pipe-related stories, written dozens of articles for pipe journals, given numerous speeches at pipe club banquets and written books that are bestsellers in the pipe world and have been translated into other languages, including German and Chinese. And it all started with Peterson.

This is because my first great-smoking pipe was a Peterson Shamrock that I bought in 1978. It was not my first pipe, but it was my first pipe that smoked almost magically, like nothing I had experienced before, and it spurred me on to try many great Petersons over the years, which in turn led to my unrepentant passion for pipes over the course of a lifetime.

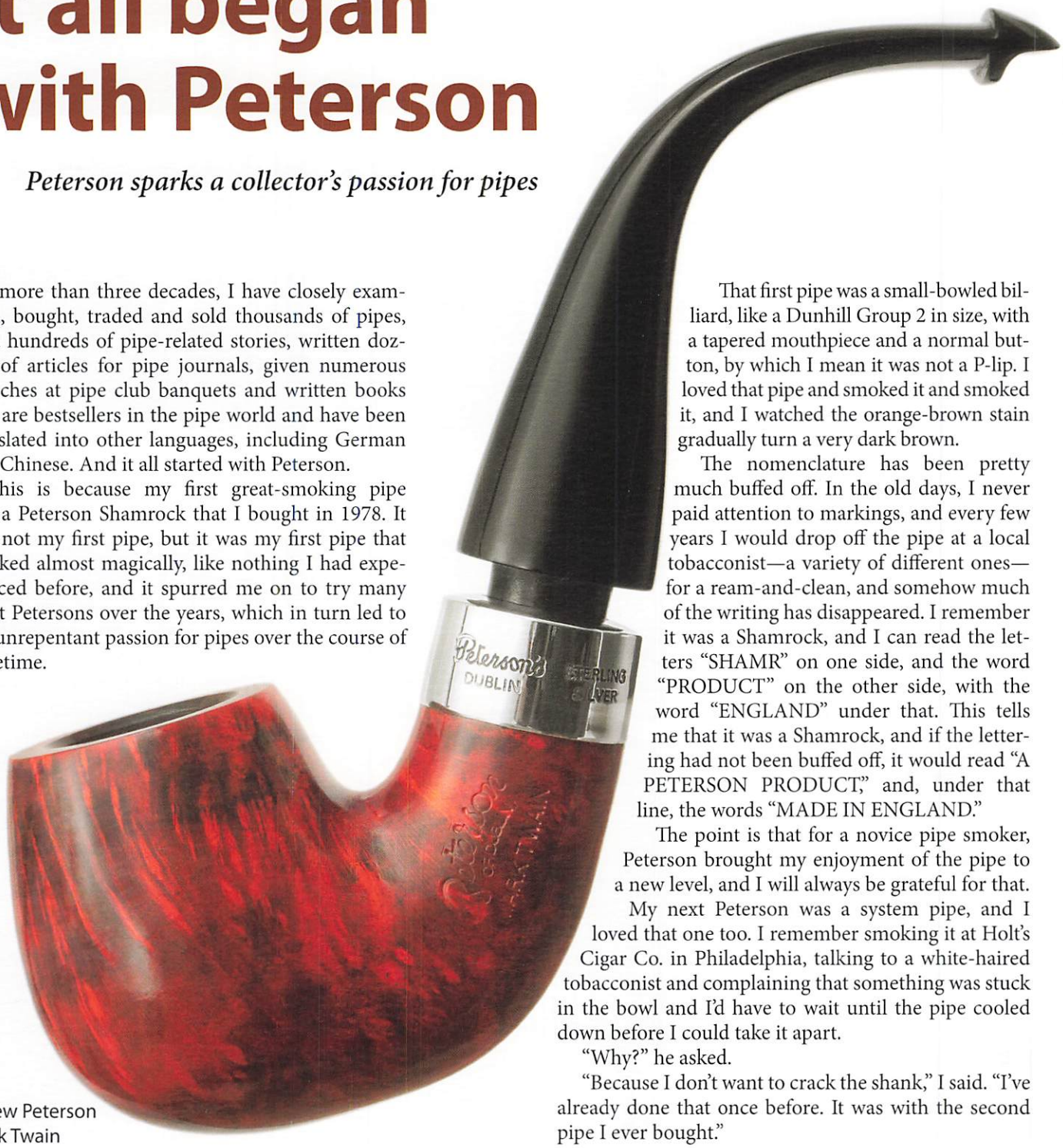


Photo courtesy of Smokingpipes.com

A new Peterson Mark Twain

That first pipe was a small-bowled billiard, like a Dunhill Group 2 in size, with a tapered mouthpiece and a normal button, by which I mean it was not a P-lip. I loved that pipe and smoked it and smoked it, and I watched the orange-brown stain gradually turn a very dark brown.

The nomenclature has been pretty much buffed off. In the old days, I never paid attention to markings, and every few years I would drop off the pipe at a local tobacconist—a variety of different ones—for a ream-and-clean, and somehow much of the writing has disappeared. I remember it was a Shamrock, and I can read the letters "SHAMR" on one side, and the word "PRODUCT" on the other side, with the word "ENGLAND" under that. This tells me that it was a Shamrock, and if the lettering had not been buffed off, it would read "A PETERSON PRODUCT," and, under that line, the words "MADE IN ENGLAND."

The point is that for a novice pipe smoker, Peterson brought my enjoyment of the pipe to a new level, and I will always be grateful for that.

My next Peterson was a system pipe, and I loved that one too. I remember smoking it at Holt's Cigar Co. in Philadelphia, talking to a white-haired tobacconist and complaining that something was stuck in the bowl and I'd have to wait until the pipe cooled down before I could take it apart.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I don't want to crack the shank," I said. "I've already done that once before. It was with the second pipe I ever bought."

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Photo by Mark Irwin

Centenary Oom Paul with a tin of Arcadia Mixture

"Here, let me have your pipe," said the elderly man.

I handed it to him with some trepidation; I'd gotten the pipe going full blast and smoke was still curling out of the top.

"With a silver-banded military mount like this pipe has," he said, as he pointed to the silver band, "it is no problem to take the pipe apart while it is still burning," and he proceeded to do just that. I was shocked and scared, thinking he just broke my pipe.

But after he ran a cleaner through the pipe, I looked inside the wood of the shank to make sure that nothing was cracked, and sure enough, it was fine. "Wow, this is amazing," I said.

At one of the first Chicago pipe shows in the mid-1990s, I found another Peterson billiard with a tapered stem, only this one had a P-lip. The bowl was bigger than my beloved Shamrock, maybe a Group 5, and it had a meerschaum lining. The meerschaum had turned a dark brown color and was pretty nasty-looking. The pipe was a pre-Republic specimen, with clear stamping: "Made in Ireland."

I was with the Danish pipemaker Jess Chonowitsch, who knows as much about pipemaking as anyone I have ever met. I asked Jess if he thought the walls were thick enough to handle it if I had the meerschaum lining removed. He studied the pipe for a while and said, in a Danish accent, "Yes, they are thick enough, and you will have no problem. In fact, it will be like smoking a new pipe because tobacco has never touched the wood inside the bowl. I have never heard of this, but it's pretty clever. I have never understood why you Americans like used pipes, but this will be different."

So I bought the pipe and sent it to the late Jim Benjamin for refurbishing. He told me that no one had ever asked him to remove a meerschaum lining before, and it took him a while to figure out the best way to cut it out. He then cleaned the shank and mouthpiece and sent me the pipe.

Since no one had ever smoked tobacco in the wood, it was almost as if it were a brand-new pipe. I was very curious to see if it smoked like a new pipe or one that had been broken in over time.

The result was astounding. It smoked like a well-used pipe that had been broken in completely over the years, yet I could see raw wood inside the bowl when I loaded it with tobacco. I asked Jess if he knew why, and he said it was probably because of the heat inside the bowl, but he did not know for sure and was only speculating.

That is a great test. I have since looked for more old, meerschaum-lined, Peterson "Made in Ireland" pipes but have yet to find another one.

When I visited the Peterson factory in 1998, I spent time with the affable Tony Whalen, who started working at Peterson in 1952. Tony was the bowl department manager at the time I met with him. I wanted to know more about the dating guide for Petersons, and specifically when Peterson started using the nomenclature "Made in the Republic of Ireland." Tony said 1949.

Subsequently I attended pipe shows with confidence that any Peterson pipe I found that said "Made in Ireland" was made before that year. So you can imagine my excitement when I found two beautifully grained Oom Paul pipes that said "Made in Ireland." They looked almost new! I could not believe my find! Century-old, or half-century old, pipes that looked like they came out of the factory last week.

But later I showed these pipes to my friend, Rich Esserman, who confirmed what I secretly feared: There is no way these new-looking pipes were made a hundred years ago. "Maybe they were commemorative pipes," Rich said.

I researched it, and, sure enough, Rich was correct. ▶

Photos by Mark Irwin

Photo by Chris Johnson, courtesy of Smokingpipes.com

An unrestored system 308

In the early 1990s Peterson came out with the Peterson Commemorative Patent System Pipe (1890-1990) Limited Edition No. 12393. One of my pipes was made in 1990 and the other in 1994.

I have been smoking these pipes for many years, and they smoke like a dream. They are fantastic, and I have been told that they have become difficult to find since Peterson only made a limited number.

I love the Mark Twain pipes, where part of the tenon is visible as it goes into the shank. I have acquired four of them, and they are all worth raving about. The first is a large bowl that looks very much like the ones that Mark Twain actually smoked. It was made in the 1920s. The second one I acquired was made in the 1930s and was unsmoked when I bought it in the mid-'90s. This is a much smaller pipe, with a bowl size that could be described as tiny. But the light brown stain has colored beautifully. Both of these pipes, which are stamped "Made in Ireland," are absolutely first-rate smokers.

There are two other Mark Twain pipes in my collection, and I can't say enough good things about them. They both smoke beautifully and are gorgeous to look at. One was made in 1962 and is a rusticated bowl with a black stain and red undercoating, which is visible and quite stunning when held under a bright light. The most recent of my Mark Twain pipes was acquired when I visited the Peterson store on Grafton Street in 2012, only a few weeks before the store was to be moved to larger quarters. It is a smooth bowl with a special sort of lacquer to give the surface an incredible shine.

I know, I know—varnish is supposed to clog the pores of the wood and cause the pipe to be a lousy smoker. But that has not been my experience with this pipe. It is absolutely stunning to look at, and it is a wonderful smoker. The bowl is good-sized (about a Dunhill Group 5), and I just love this pipe.

Part of what appeals to me is the elegance of the shape. It is a standard Mark Twain, which I would call a bent billiard, and Peterson has perfected this shape above all others. In my opinion, no other factory makes a more beautiful classically shaped bent pipe than Peterson.

In 2004 I visited my hometown of Chicago for the Thanksgiving holiday. For history buffs, it was Abraham Lincoln who declared that the last Thursday of each November would be a national holiday in America, and I always associate Thanksgiving with my childhood in Illinois, known as "the land of Lincoln." My parents were in their 80s, about to go into a nursing home, and my wife and I were looking forward to spending time with them.

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, we went downtown so I could shop at Iwan Ries, one of the finest pipe stores in the world. The owner, Chuck Levi, was there and as friendly as ever.

I asked Chuck if he had anything special that I might like. "Well, I remember that you wrote about Peterson pipes in your book," he said, referring to *In Search of Pipe Dreams*. "Yes, I do have something. We just found it in the back storage area—a Peterson Year 2000 Limited Edition Collection set, which includes an engraved pipe stand."

"I'd love to see it," I said.

The beautiful wooden stand, which holds two pipes, was a smaller version of the engraved Peterson stand for the seven-day Sherlock Holmes set, which I already had at home displayed in my den.

The pipes were startlingly beautiful. There was a bent pipe with a silver spigot and a flat top that was slightly beveled on the outside circle. Then there was a straight apple with a silver cap and a silver band. The bird's-eye on both was stunning!

At top, the Peterson Limited Edition 2000 set with stand (photo courtesy of Angela Fortune). A Mark Twain 15B from the 1920s is at center, and below that, a Mark Twain 21B from the 1930s (from a Peterson catalog courtesy of Premel Chheda).

A great new pipe book

Rick Newcombe's Still Searching for Pipe Dreams

Rick Newcombe, author of *In Search of Pipe Dreams*, now has a second book out, *Still Searching for Pipe Dreams*. *P&T* asked Newcombe to comment.

Who are you and what are your qualifications for writing about pipes?

I love to write, and I love pipes—collecting them, smoking them, refurbishing them and a hundred other activities associated with pipes. I started smoking a pipe 35 years ago as a way to quit cigarettes, and that was one of the best decisions of my life. Frank Burla, who founded the internationally famous Chicago pipe show, recently sent me a letter saying that I had become a legend in the hobby. I think I'm too young to be a legend, but it was a nice compliment.

As for who I am, ... I was born in Chicago in 1950, studied at Georgetown and at the University of Chicago, with interests in history, politics, journalism and business. I have been an advertising copywriter for Leo Burnett, a reporter and editor for UPI, general manager of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, president of Rupert Murdoch's News America Syndicate and an entrepreneur—the founder of Creators (*www.creators.com*), which is a worldwide media company based in Southern California. We were in Los Angeles for 25 years, but the business tax forced us to move in 2012 to Hermosa Beach, which was a good thing because we bought our own building. Creators is a family business, and my son Jack, aged 30, runs the company as president.

What do you hope to accomplish for the hobby with these books?

The hobby keeps changing, and I'm always amazed at the exciting new developments. What is important for me is to tell you what I like and to encourage you to tell me what you like. It is important that I have fun with my pipe collecting and pipe friendships, and I try to communicate my enthusiasm for the hobby with my books.

What are the best things about being a pipe smoker?

Without a doubt the best aspect of pipe smoking is creating a Zen-like state of mind. In one of the chapters, I interviewed a bunch of experienced pipe smokers, asking them about their favorite time of day to enjoy a pipe, and their answers were all over the map. But what they had in common was that each one of them said they turn to their pipes for relaxation and meditation.

***In Search of Pipe Dreams* and *Still Searching for Pipe Dreams* are two very different books. How did the second come about?**

The content is different, but the format is similar in that I reprint speeches and articles that I have written over the years, though more than a third of *Still Searching for Pipe Dreams* consists of new material. I always wanted a smaller book—more sleek, a faster read and easy to carry around, which the second one is. In addition, the digital revolution has changed book publishing forever, with e-books poised to outsell all other books. Both of mine are available on Kindle, Nook, iPad and all the other forms of electronic book tablets. Originally my second book was going to be an e-book only, but at the last minute I decided to do a limited print run, and that will be sold out soon. I'm not sure if I will go back to press or just stick with the e-books. As for content, I have no shortage of opinions in both books, but I avoid dogma like the plague.

Did you find when you finished *In Search of Pipe Dreams* that you still had much to explore?

Absolutely—because I love everything about pipes and the pipe world. I am in awe of great pipemakers. I love reading books and articles about pipes, even if I don't always agree with the writers. I love studying the history of various pipe brands. I love experimenting with ways to make old pipes look and smoke like new. Most important these days, I love making friends in the

pipe community. Pipe friendships are like no others because we share a passion for something that is unfathomable to nearly everyone else.

How would you characterize the two books? The first seems to go into specific pipe brands while the second seems to look at the pipe community and the fun of pipe smoking in a more detailed manner. Does that seem correct to you?

Yes, that is a good summary. In both cases I place a premium on writing in a conversational style—so that the reader feels as if he knows me—as if we are chatting over coffee and a pipe. I also try to make sure that the books are compelling reading. I love it when I get fan mail saying, "I couldn't put it down," or words to that effect. A pipe smoker from Sweden sent me a note recently saying that my new book kept him enthralled during a long flight to Asia, and that was the ultimate compliment.

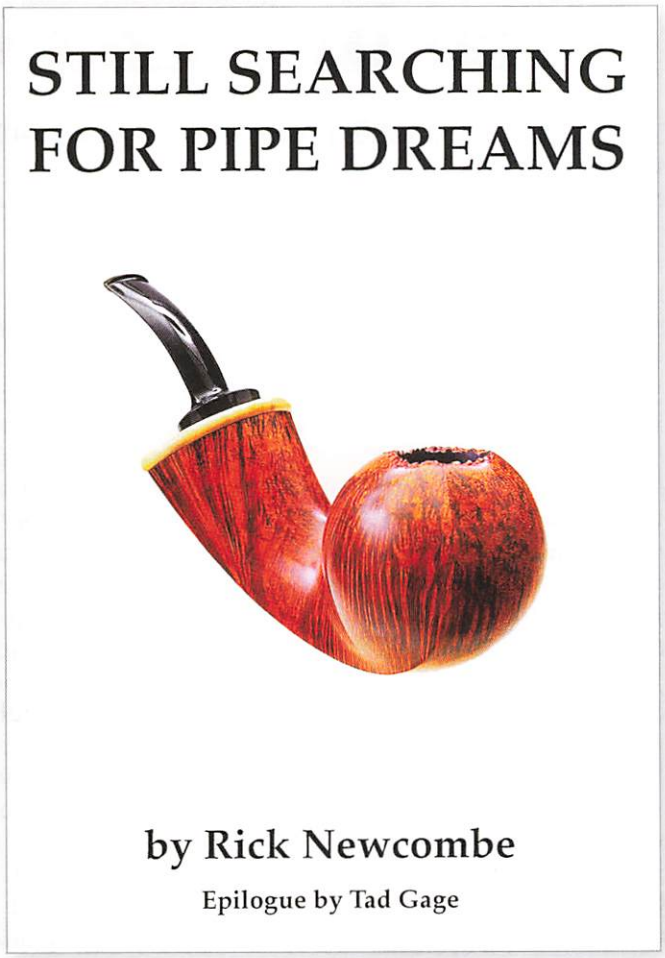
The title, *Still Searching ...*, seems to indicate a continuing and perhaps unending exploration of pipes, almost as a philosophy of life.

Yes, pipes hold an endless fascination for me. My philosophy is to be happy and enjoy every day, which for me requires living a balanced life. That means a life filled with love, creativity, good health, intellectual curiosity and ... pipes. I wrote a chapter called Balance, which explains this in some detail.

In his epilogue, Tad Gage describes *Still Searching* as a "quietly rebellious book." Do you think that's accurate?

It is accurate. In fact, the first chapter is called A Quiet Revolution. Throughout the book I explain the difference between the pipe smoker of today versus the pipe smoker of a half century ago. Then, many pipe smokers were conformists. Today, to be a pipe smoker, you must be a rebel to some extent. It is not the purpose of pipe smoking, but it is a requirement today because it takes so much effort and such a thick skin to put up with all the restrictions and condemnations that society gives us.

What are the most valuable thoughts readers may take with them after reading *Still Searching*?



The book weaves in a surprising number of facts about pipes, but my primary purpose is to provide an interesting read—something that you want to keep reading. Just last week I received a fan mail note in which the writer praised it greatly and then lamented that the book had come to an end. "I want more," he said, and that told me that I had accomplished my goal, at least with him. I believe that moderate pipe smoking, without inhaling, actually promotes good health because of its stress-reducing benefits, especially compared with the dangerous tranquilizers that are dispensed so freely these days. That is an important message of the book, as is the fact that we pipe smokers have discovered a secret treasure that is unknown to the rest of the world.

What are you excited about exploring in the future?

Everything, as long as it is related to pipes. I am currently recording *Still Searching for Pipe Dreams* as an audio book, which will be the first pipe-related audio book ever recorded, and it will be sold through iTunes. My son is interviewing me at the end of each chapter, and I am commenting on various parts of the book. This will provide an addition for the audio book—a fair amount of totally new material. Once we finish, we plan on doing the same with *In Search of Pipe Dreams.*

I am amazed at the number of talented new pipemakers and fantastic new blends of tobacco, so I see the future as very exciting. It is never easy for me to sell or trade one of my pipes, but I sometimes do so because I want to try new pipes, and I don't want to wind up with thousands of pipes. When the pipemaker Per Hansen and I had dinner in Santa Monica after he had seen my collection, he asked, "How many pipes do you have?" and I told him 400. "I have four," he said, and we both laughed. Of course he can always make more—I wish I could! But this reminded me that the most important thing is to enjoy and appreciate what we have. P&T

Rick Newcombe's book can be purchased at:

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BY TAD GAGE AND JOE HARB

Trial by FIRE

We're taking a close look at Cornell & Diehl's tobacco series honoring groundbreaking African-American members of the military. It also gives us the chance to review First Responders. Originally named Tribute, this blend was created by Greg Pease for C&D as a tribute to those who responded to the September 11 crisis and to raise funds for the families of September 11 victims. It has been recently reissued as First Responders. We're also pleased to have an opportunity to review Crooked Lane, a new blend created by Mark Stewart, Craig Tarler and Chris Tarler, who has assumed leadership of the company following the passing of his father this past September.

It's also a pleasure to help celebrate McClelland Tobacco Co.'s 35th anniversary by reviewing its newest blends, Virginia-based Stave-Aged 35 and FrogMorton's Cellar. Both mixtures feature a rare 23.6 percent sugar content orange Virginia leaf and a unique incorporation of barrel staves cut from charred oak barrels used to age fine whiskeys. A 1-inch chunk of stave is included in each tin—all-American Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey for Stave-Aged 35 and whiskey of undisclosed origin for FM's Cellar.

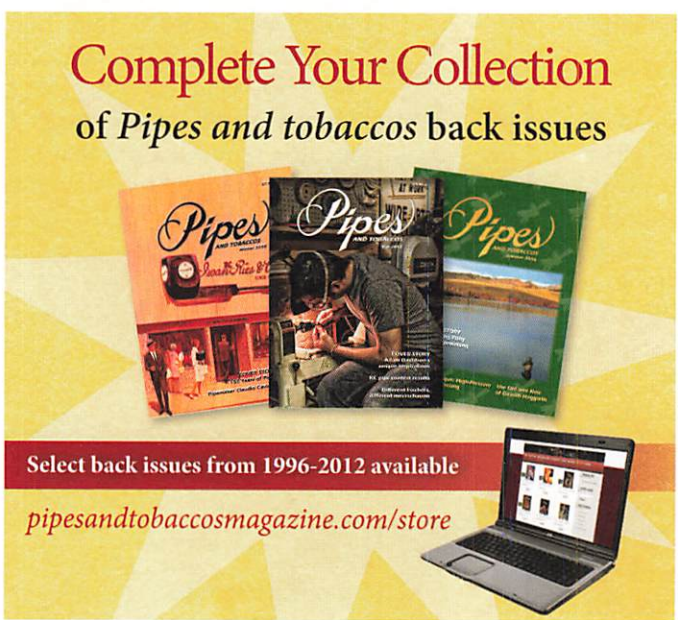
"The concept of infusing the flavor of spirits into pipe tobacco has been something Mary (McNiel) and I have dwelled on for a good decade," says McClelland's Mike McNiel. "Experience has proven to us that directly applying even the best spirits to pipe tobacco doesn't impart much flavor and makes the mixture taste harsher. There are many artificial spirit flavors used in aromatic blends, and we certainly didn't want to go that route."

McNiel isn't sure exactly when the inspiration struck to experiment with booze-infused charred casks used to age fine whiskeys, but once it did, McClelland set about buying a few casks for experimentation. These casks, which have been used for aging whiskey for at least eight years, share and absorb a significant amount of oils and aromatics from the liquor, which is then released through slow evaporation. Tobacco readily absorbs airborne flavors and aromas, which is why they so readily "marry" flavors when blended.

It became immediately apparent that when a batch of tobacco was exposed to a cut white oak barrel stave, it absorbed the essential oils and flavors aged into the wood without masking the tobacco sugars and increasing heat as in direct application of spirits. The wood and charred barrel interior also gave off flavor.

"Before aging whiskey in charred oak barrels, you basically have white lightning. That's true, even if it's a very high quality liquor made from the finest ingredients," notes McNiel. "It's the long-term exposure to the char and wood that gives whiskey a lot of its character, complexity and color. When we started cutting up these staves, the aroma in the factory was incredible, almost heady. But once cut, all that essence evaporates rapidly, so we had to develop a process for quickly getting these chunks into the tins and sealing them so the tobacco would absorb these essences. It only takes a few days in the tin for the tobacco to be infused with the flavor."

That was a daunting challenge, explained McNiel, but equally daunting was combining tobaccos that complemented the whiskey's flavor. That quest required months of experimentation and many disappointments. "We tried a lot of very good tobaccos and blend combinations that just didn't work with the staves," explains McNiel. "When we acquired some exceptional high-sugar Virginia, we knew we had the right vehicle to complete the proj-



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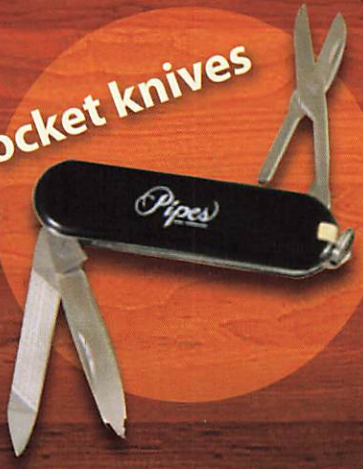

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ect." He adds that each bourbon-aged barrel yields about 1,350 chunks and some waste. Because the staves are curved, cutting to minimize loss is a challenge.

Allow me a couple of final notes. I believe some folks will say these tobaccos are cased—they are not. While the staves take up a little space, they don't count toward the total weight, so a 50-gram tin, for example, contains a full 50 grams of tobacco. And despite the prominent flavor of the whiskey, my experience was that no ghosting occurred. My best rationale for this is the infusion that takes place is of airborne volatile oils and creates primarily an olfactory experience. A direct application of a liquid to the tobacco would tend to leave behind tangible substance during the combustion process. —Tad Gage

C&D Crooked Lane

GAGE: From the delicious Oriental-laden sweet-sour tin aroma to the rich blacks and tans of this medium ribbon mixture, this new offering from C&D leaves no question of its commitment to being a classic English blend. Crooked Lane is a balanced mixture of Oriental, Virginia and Latakia, with a hint of Perique and perhaps a pinch of toasted black Cavendish. Indeed, on lighting up, that balance comes through, with a pronounced flavor of what I suspect is Greek Basma accented by the Latakia. The Virginia leaf is not particularly sweet, quietly supporting the Oriental tobacco. The Latakia plays a more condimental role in this blend, doing more to lend a coolness and subtle richness rather than any pronounced smokiness. Likewise, the Perique provides just an undercurrent of spice. Crooked Lane is exceptionally consistent from start to finish, never straying from the Oriental-Virginia profile. There is a slight, almost dusty aftertaste found in many Oriental-forward mixtures. For those who enjoy an interesting yet straightforward medium English mixture, this team effort from Cornell & Diehl is definitely worth a try.

HARB: Described on the label as a full English blend, Crooked Lane has a tin aroma that suggests only a light touch of Latakia. But at first light, a stout, rich flavor with lots of depth is produced, with the Virginias and Orientals subduing the smokiness of the Latakia, and the Perique providing a bit more body than I expected. By mid-bowl the Latakia emerged and contributed more to the flavor, but it was not at the level I would classify as a full English blend. I found the coarse cut of the tobaccos better for medium to large bowl sizes. The cut helped produce a cool and slow burn to the blend, the Virginias added subtle sweetness and the Orientals added a nice pungency. Crooked Lane burned dry and left a soft gray ash. Overall, this is a very nice English/Balkan blend that can be enjoyed any time of the day.

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C&D First Responders

GAGE: First Responders is once again available—back by popular demand. A variety of Virginias plus toasted Cavendish and Perique range from fine ribbon cut to bold chunks of leaf, making for an exciting visual feast with a lightly sweet and mushroom-like tin aroma. Part of the interest of this blend is the variety of cuts, and after numerous experiments, I strongly recommend not picking apart any of the chunks. They add greatly to the overall interest. The relatively dry mixture lights easily, with an explosion of rich flavor and loads of smoke volume. The Virginias are more earthy than sugary sweet, and indeed hop from one flavor to another when your fire lays into one of those hefty chunks. For a serious Virginia mixture, the nicotine level is surprisingly modest. The nicely aged Virginias smoke remarkably cool. This should cellar nicely, giving the Virginias a chance to intensify. However, because the mixture is relatively dry in the tin (I believe pipe tobacco ages better and faster when slightly moist), you might have success by opening a couple tins, lightly misting with distilled water and storing in a tightly sealed glass Mason jar. With a lot of interest but without too many assertive flavors, I thought this was a particularly appealing morning smoke—a nice complement to tea or coffee.

HARB: First Responders has red, bright and stoved Virginias lightly seasoned with Perique and flavored with Cavendish. The combined Virginias produce a light sweetness, with the Perique adding a fruity note to the smoke. The Cavendish finishes off the blend with a bit of intrigue. The Perique comes off from the beginning and adds a good spiciness and a medium level of body felt on the palate. I let the tobacco dry a bit for a second tasting, which increased the flavor level, but I didn't get as much nuance from the interaction of the tobaccos.

C&D Montford Point Marine

GAGE: Very moist straight from the tin, Montfort Point is a very dark, moderately shaggy mixture with the bonfire aroma of dark fired Burley and rich balsamic vinegar. Perique and Latakia add more darkness to the deep mahogany color of the Burley. Although the blend smokes well, a couple days' drying improved its

burning characteristics. The smoke is velvety, but it is stout—not so much from nicotine but from the incredible intensity of the Burley and Perique. It's reminiscent of a fat deli sandwich crammed with roast beef, pastrami and salami. Dark fired Burley is different from dark fired Kentucky—earthier and less sweet. The addition of Perique and Latakia layers in some additional, and quite assertive, flavor nuances. The blend has been around for a while but may not have received the recognition it deserves for being a unique offering that brings these three leathery, meaty, fruity and smoky tobaccos together in one mixture.

HARB: This features dark fired Kentucky Burley with Latakia and Perique added for spice and complexity. It has coarse-cut tobaccos in long ribbons, and this makes it easy to pack and keep lit. The tin aroma has the smokiness of the Latakia complemented with the tang and zest of the Perique, both of which are distinct. The tobaccos used are well-balanced for smoothness. Between the Burley and the Perique, Montford Point Marine is, in my opinion, a blend about the level of body, and that level is best described as stout. The flavor of the blend depends on the faint fruitiness of the Perique and the smokiness of the Latakia, which is neither prominent nor dominant, coupled with the stout richness of the dark Burley. This should be a Burley lover's delight.

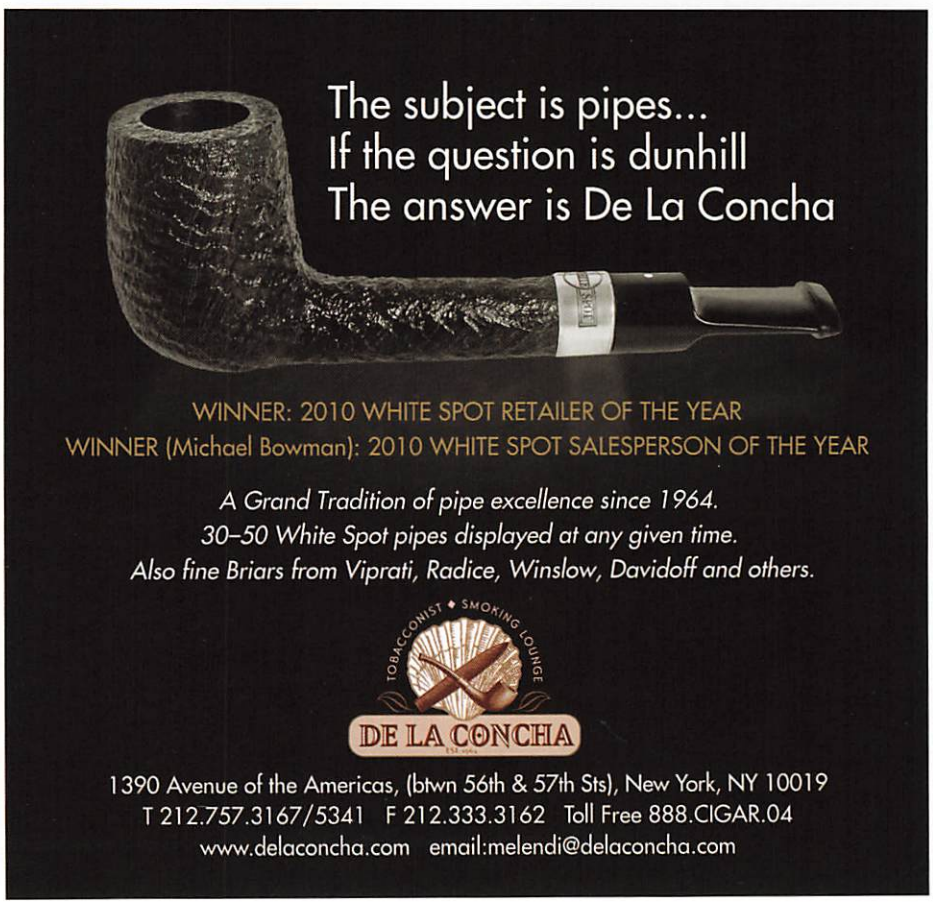
C&D USS Mason

GAGE: Paying tribute to the first Navy ship in World War II manned by an African-American crew, the lightly pungent, slightly tangy tin aroma draws you in. The ribbon-cut Burley and Virginias, flecked with small chunks of Latakia and Perique, are less moist than some tobaccos right out of the tin, and ready to smoke. There's an immediate spiciness delivered at two different levels by the smoky Latakia and peppery Perique. Burley definitely takes the flavor lead, yet it's made decidedly more interesting by a modest sprinkling of Virginia leaf. The appealing black pepper notes continue throughout the smoke, with the Perique flavor becoming even more pronounced. If you're a Perique nut like me, this mixture delivers a lot of that character while stopping just short of overpowering. The sprinkling of brandy the mixture receives is not something you readily taste, but perhaps makes a contribution. Latakia has a cooling but minor role in the blend, binding the flavors. USS Mason carries a modest nicotine kick, particularly in the second half of the bowl, which can get a little heady. As the smoke progresses, the nicotine and Virginias provide more sweetness than at the start. This hearty mixture strikes me as a particularly nice choice for cool-weather puffing.

C&D Buffalo Soldier

GAGE: I simply cannot smoke this without hearing Bob Marley lilting his way through his famous reggae song. A fitting tribute to African-American soldiers, this medium ribbon-cut mixture of Virginia, Latakia and Perique has a surprising tin aroma more reminiscent of an Oriental blend than a predominantly Virginia blend. The pre-light draw, however, leans more toward Virginias. Right off the bat, it's exceptionally peppery from the Perique, with a touch of Latakia smokiness. It's a Va-Per with the emphasis on Per, but if you crave that spicy character, it definitely delivers. I found that letting the bowl sit for about five minutes after the initial light gave the Virginias a chance to join the chorus. Still, bold flavors of leather, cumin and black pepper dominated the smoke, giving it a hearty outdoorsy character. With loads of smoke volume, it's easy to puff this mixture slowly to give the tobaccos a chance to develop maximum flavor and minimum sugar-induced sharpness from the Virginias.

HARB: The aroma from the tin is sweet and fragrant, with a light note of smoky Latakia and a light tartness from the Perique. I let the blend air and dry a bit before I loaded it into the pipe. At first light, there was a distinct but light note of pungent Latakia. Once stoked and burning smoothly, I detected a good level of body from the Perique. All the component tobaccos worked well together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to deliver a pleasant flavor with waves of nuance from each as I progressed down the bowl, but the Latakia and Perique primarily set the tone of the blend. Buffalo Soldier is described on the label as well-rounded, and it is certainly that. It has an overall light to medium flavor profile that is suitable any time of the day. This is a good candidate for your "to try" list.

C&D Tuskegee Airman

GAGE: Presented as a loosely pressed cake, Tuskegee Airman breaks into chunks and ribbons that offer up a fruity and red wine vinegar tin aroma with pungent overtones of Turkish. Although it's a cake, the lightly broken tobacco has a ready-to-smoke moisture content, although breaking up the cake and allowing a couple days of tin drying made it easier to light and keep burning. True to the initial aroma, the Oriental leaf jumps to the fore, backed by a touch of fruit from the aged Virginias. With the addition of Latakia and Perique, neither of which are especially prominent, this develops into a pretty assertive mixture halfway down the bowl. The Virginia, while aged and smooth, was a bit sharp. I think six months of mellowing in the tin would reduce this sharpness. Tuskegee Airman is an easy smoke that burns cool and leaves a light, pleasing aftertaste.

HARB: The tin aroma is sweet and zesty, pungent with Oriental tobaccos and Latakia, and fruity with Perique. My sample came as a single pressed plug that was easy to break apart. With the plug holding the moisture, I let the rubbed-out tobacco dry awhile and then loaded it into a medium-sized pipe. At first light, the Perique came off first, complemented by a nice Oriental character and underlying sweetness from the Virginias in the blend. As I progressed down the bowl, the Latakia contributed some smokiness to the flavors, but I felt it was more as a condiment than as a major player in the flavor profile. It was the Perique and Orientals that characterized this blend. Tuskegee Airman burned slowly and cool and left a soft, gray ash. I enjoyed this blend more than the others in the series because it was more a Balkan-type blend than an English-type blend. It could be another candidate for your "to try" list and would possibly end up in your rotation.

McClelland Stave-Aged 35

GAGE: Open this tin, take a deep whiff, and you're pretty much smelling a snifter of fine, barrel-aged bourbon. The whiskey aroma is dominant. Visually, this all-Virginia, medium-fine, ribbon-cut mixture ranges from deep brown leaf aged for three years through mahogany, tan, orange and red Virginia to just a touch of yellow bright Virginia. The moisture content was just right out of the tin, working well with a number of bowl-packing methods, from the "trickle" method to Fred Hanna's air-pocket packing method (stuffing a clump of tobacco in the bowl and leaving a pocket of air at the bottom of the bowl). For an all-Virginia mixture, it burns remarkably slow, with no bite. The initial light delivers a delightful wallop of bourbon flavor, and the blend quickly settles into an interplay of exceptionally sweet Virginia flavor with a pleasing hint of the whiskey. There's also a light wood character and a touch of smokiness from the charred portion of the barrel. It's sweet and mellow without any fruit. The bourbon is less pronounced in the second half of the bowl but still lightly present, offering one of the more satisfying Virginia mixtures I've ever smoked.

HARB: Matured and stoved Virginia ribbons have been infused from a block of barrel oak used to age Kentucky bourbon whiskey that has been placed in each tin. The Virginias used are sweet and zesty, and are well-complemented by the flavoring from the whiskey. The moisture level in the tin is suitable for loading in the pipe

without drying. At the charring light, the whiskey aroma and flavoring came off easily, adding a subtle, sweet note to the flavors of the Virginias. There was an initial tendency to overheat that quickly subsided as the infusion burned off, and the blend settled down to a cool, slow burn. This is a very fragrant, mellow, smooth and rich Virginia-based blend introduced to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the company.

McClelland FrogMorton's Cellar

GAGE: The various iterations of FrogMorton are well-loved by many, but whether or not you're a Frog fan, Cellar is unlike any other Frog blend. Not only does it incorporate a charred white oak whiskey barrel stave, it includes significantly more Virginia leaf. The tin aroma is like a ganache, smelling of dark chocolate, vanilla, wood and whiskey. Like other Frog mixtures, it's loaded with black Latakia, but visually it's clear there is more Virginia in this blend. So when you light up, it's decidedly sweeter and less Latakia-forward despite the high Latakia content. The whiskey and

wood is less prominent than in Stave-Aged 35, while the Latakia jumps in with caramel, leather and cocoa. The use of the high-sugar orange Virginia leaf plays off the deeper flavors of the Latakia and some bright Virginia included in the mixture. Make no mistake: There's plenty of Latakia to go around, and it becomes more pronounced in the last third of the bowl. Many blenders have aimed to create sweet, spirits-flavored English mixtures, whether with the addition of cased aromatics, Cavendish or the like. Cellar successfully accomplishes this while staying true to a flavored but uncased English blend.

HARB: McClelland took an innovative approach for its 35th anniversary and came up with a novel blend to add to the FrogMorton series. The result was the creation of FrogMorton's Cellar, which includes an aged bourbon whiskey infusion that adds both sweetness and exceptional fragrance to the blend. Based on sweet and stoved Virginias with a Latakia component, FrogMorton's Cellar is rich and smooth, with the components well-balanced. The flavor and aroma of the aged whiskey is obvious at the charring light and continues through the bowl, although it is diminished slightly past mid-bowl. The Latakia is prominent in the smoke without overwhelming the other tobaccos, and the stoved Virginia adds a delicate sweetness. Overall, the flavor profile is at a medium level that remains the same from start to finish, making this a blend that can be enjoyed any time of the day or night. The blend smokes cool and dry and leaves a soft gray ash. It has been a while since a blend has been added to the FrogMorton series, and this whiskey-infused, 35th anniversary creation continues the tradition of the series. P&T

Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show

The Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show will be May 4–5, 2013, at the Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174. Reservation telephone numbers are 800.999.3319 or 630.584.6300. Mention the show and receive a special room rate. For more information, contact Craig Cobine at *porshcigar@aol.com* or visit the show's website at *www.chicagopipeshow.com*.

CORPS pipe show

The 29th annual Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers Pipe & Cigar Smokers Exposition will be Oct. 11–13, 2013, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, at 403 N. Third St., Richmond, VA 23219. Show hours will be Saturday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Visit the CORPS website at *www.corpipesmokers.org* or the CORPS Facebook page (search: Conclave) for more information and direct links to exhibitor table reservations, hotel room reservations, member information and expo updates.

Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show

The 2013 Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show will be June 21–23 at the Doubletree Hotel, 10100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210. Call the hotel at 913.451.6100 and ask for the Greater KC Pipe Club room block to receive a special room rate. The 2013 show will feature the fourth annual carver's contest with contestants offering entries in the Dublin family of shapes. For more information, visit the Kansas City Pipe Club's website at *www.gkcpipeclub.com* or contact Quinton Wells at 816.223.9506; email: *quinton@gkcpipeclub.com*.

NASPC Show

The annual North American Society of Pipe Collectors Show will be Saturday, Aug. 24, 2013, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, OH 43017. Phone the hotel at 866.372.5566 and mention the NASPC Show to receive a special room rate. For show information, contact Bill Unger at NASPC, P.O. Box 9642, Columbus, OH 43209; phone: 614.436.3751; email: *bill@naspc.org*.

Raleigh pipe show

The Triangle Area Pipe Smokers Club (TAPS) is hosting its 16th Annual Pipe and Tobacco Expo Saturday, April 13, 2013, from 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the James G. Martin Building at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds. For more information, contact TAPS at 919.475.0445; email: *pipechief@nc.rr.com*; website: *www.tapsclub.us*.

St. Louis pipe show

The St. Louis Pipe Club's 25th Annual Gateway Area Pipe Show & Swap will be Feb. 16, 2013, from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. at the Heart of St. Charles Banquet Center at 1410 S. Fifth St., St. Charles, MO 63301; phone: 636.947.8270. Lodging is available at the Quality Inn & Suites, 1425 S. Fifth St., St. Charles, MO 63301; phone: 636.946.6936. Mention the show for the $67 room rate. For more information, contact Bob Callaway at 220 Pralle Lane, St. Charles, MO 63303; phone: 636.946.8555.

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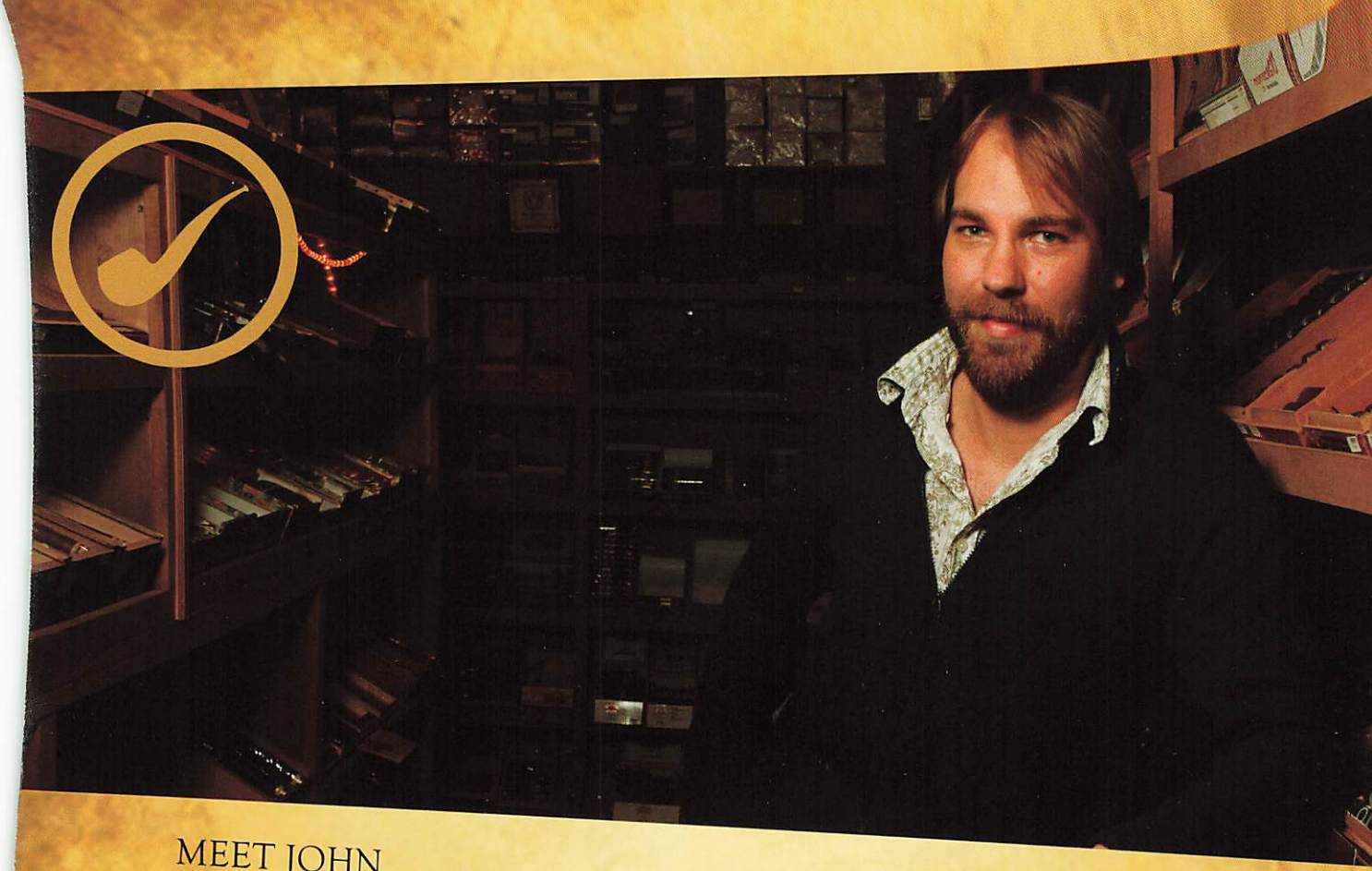

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